

THE ANNEXATION OF THE PUNJAB

Circumstances Leading TO THE Annexation of the Punjab

1846-1849
(A HISTORICAL REVISION)

By
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TO
MY FATHER
WHO IS JUST A MEMORY NOW

If anyone wonders why, after so many other histories have been written, I also should have had the idea of writing one, let him begin by reading through all those others, then turn to mine, and after that he may wonder, if he will.

FLAVIUS ARRIANOS
(A. D. 95-180)

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PREFACE

An attempt is made in the following pages to discuss critically the circumstances leading to the annexation of the Punjab from 1846 to 1849. The available sources for this subject are large and widely spread, but I have endeavoured to leave none of them untapped. I was specially fortunate in having access to the Private Correspondence of Sir Frederick Currie,* in addition to that mine of first-hand information, the Punjab Government Records. The published correspondence of the Governors-General during the period 1839-1849, especially the private letters of Lord Ellenborough to the Duke of Wellington and Queen Victoria, lays bare the British imperialistic designs on the Punjab, while the unpublished Currie correspondence (hitherto unused in any historical treatise dealing with this period) reveals a sordid tale of unscrupulousness and duplicity whereby the British were able to write the Sikh kingdom off the map of India. The tragedy of the situation is heightened by the fact that in this case the British have succeeded in their attempt not only to suppress, but also to distort deliberately, the true facts; and the official view of the subject that it was a strange combination of circumstance and destiny that made the British step into the vacuum created by the death of Ranjit Singh, has come to stay. The facts which have now been brought to light by these sources have, however, radically altered the established conception of the events that led to the annexation of the Punjab, and have consequently necessitated a complete reorientation of the subject.

*These letters, which are preserved in the Museum of the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Poona, were exchanged between Sir Frederick Currie—who held several high posts in the Punjab, including that of the British Resident at Lahore, during this period—and Lords Hardinge and Dalhousie.

Apart from my obligations to a large number of scholars who have written on this subject—obligations which I have tried to indicate in the foot-notes and the bibliography—, I have great pleasure in acknowledging more specific and personal debts. Most of all, I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Yuvraj Krishan, who gave me the benefit of a thoughtful criticism of my manuscript and made several salutary suggestions. I have next to thank Mr. M. K. Rahman of Messrs. Kitabistan, for his attentive co-operation in the production of this book. Lastly, I owe grateful thanks to the editors of the *Journal of Indian History*, *The Calcutta Review*, and *The New Review*, for their permission to incorporate in this book some of my articles which appeared in their respective journals.

Lahore, 1946

JAGMOHAN MAHAJAN

ABBREVIATIONS

(used in Foot-Notes)

1. L. 60/Bk. 173, P. G. R. denotes serial letter number 60 in Book number 173, Punjab Government Records. *All references to these Records are given in a similar manner.
2. No. 202/W. E. 8. 4. 1848, P. G. R. denotes serial letter number 202 in the Proceedings of the week ending April 8, 1848, Punjab Government Records. All references to these Records are given similarly.
3. P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS denote the Records of the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Poona.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Anarchy in the Punjab after Ranjit Singh—British Designs on the Punjab—The Anglo-Sikh War of 1845-46.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh restored respect for authority in the Punjab. He inherited mutiny and created discipline, found chaos and produced order; and succeeded by the sustained effort of a lifetime in carving out a compact kingdom for himself. But his achievement, though highly remarkable, was personal and consequently ephemeral. Neither his genius nor his energy was in any measure inherited by his successors. His death in June, 1839, was thus the signal for scramble for power which lasted for about six years. There were the usual kaleidoscopic shiftings of the scene and of the chief actors in it. One by one his sons and ministers came to the front, but only to lose, after a brief interval, both power and life.

"The priest who slew the slayer
And shall himself be slain,"

sums up, better than pages of narrative could do, the anarchy that reigned supreme in the Punjab for six years immediately following the death of Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Kharak Singh. He was an imbecile and a slave to opium,¹ and soon became a puppet in the hands of one Chet Singh whom he appointed his wazir. Under the baneful influence of this arrogant minion of the new monarch, Raja Dhian Singh, the all-powerful minister under Ranjit Singh, was ignored and

¹ Gardner, *Memoirs*, Ed. Pearse (London, 1898), p. 214; Honigberger, *Thirty Five Years in the East* (London, 1852), p. 101.

insulted, and even a conspiracy was formed to assassinate him.² This plot, however, became known to Dhian Singh, who won over to his side Chand Kaur, the Maharaja's wife, and Nau Nihal Singh, the Maharaja's son—a bold and ambitious youth of eighteen—, for a *coup d'état* which had for its aim the deposition of Kharak Singh and the despatch of Chet Singh, regarding whom it was given out that he, with the concurrence of the Maharaja, contemplated submission to the British, when the Khalsa troops would be disbanded and all the Sardars turned out of their command.³ This had a strong appeal to the Sikh soldiery, who now considered the Maharaja and his wazir as parricides. At midnight on October 8, 1839, Dhian Singh with a party of about fifteen men, including his two brothers—Rajas Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh—and Prince Nau Nihal Singh, violently outraged the seclusion of the Maharaja's household, and slew the obnoxious favourite before his master's eyes.⁴ Nau Nihal Singh now took the reins of the Government in his hands, and the Maharaja retired to his private house in the city. Soon after he was reported to be indisposed, and a few months later (on November 5, 1840) followed his father to the funeral pyre.

With the passing away of the *roi faineant*, Nau Nihal Singh became *de jure* as well as *de facto* sovereign of the Punjab. The imagination of the people was now caught by the figure of this tall and handsome prince, who "was popular with the army, for he had been a soldier from his boyhood, and was of a brave and indomitable spirit, united at the same time to great caution, discretion and forethought."⁵ Ranjit Singh had entertained a very high opinion of him and had dotingly hoped that he would be able to keep the Sikh king-

² Gardner, op. cit., pp. 214-215; Honigberger, op. cit., p. 101.

³ Gardner, op. cit., pp. 216-217; Smyth, A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore, etc. (Calcutta, 1847), pp. 28-29.

⁴ Smyth, op. cit., pp. 29-30; Gardner, op. cit., pp. 218-221; M'Gregor, The History of the Sikhs (London, 1846), ii, p. 5; Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs (Lahore, 1897), p. 238.

⁵ M'Gregor, op. cit., ii, p. 5.

dom intact. But this was not to be; for his reign terminated the day it began. While returning homewards from his father's funeral rites, Nau Nihal was severely hurt by the fall of an archway under which he was passing, and soon after succumbed to the injuries. Among other casualties in this unfortunate accident—for it was nothing else⁶—were Mian Udham Singh—the son of Raja Gulab Singh—who died on the spot,⁷ Raja Dhian Singh whose “arm was severely contused

⁶ According to Smyth (op. cit., pp. 34-37) and Gardner (op. cit., pp. 23-26), the death of the prince was a premeditated machination of Dhian Singh. Cunningham is also inclined to take this view. He says: “It is not positively known that the Rajas of Jammu thus designed to remove Nau Nihal Singh; but it is difficult to acquit them of the crime, and it is certain that they were capable of committing it.”—op. cit., p. 245. As against their statements, there is the testimony of Dr. Honigberger (op. cit., pp. 102-105) who ascribes the prince's death to an accident and adduces some very cogent arguments in support of his, and against the above, assertion. The same view of the prince's death is also taken by Sohan Lal, the historiographer of the Sikhs.—vide *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Vol. IV, pt. i. pp. 70-71. Dr. G. L. Chopra, in a paper on “Death of Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh” published in the *Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings* (Vol. XVIII, 1942, pp. 29-33), discusses this incident at length and arrives at the conclusion that the death of Nau Nihal Singh was the result of an unfortunate accident and not that of any premeditated plot. In the penultimate paragraph of his paper, after recapitulating the arguments advanced by Honigberger, Dr. Chopra adds: “The incident, if it was a conspiracy was so clumsily conceived that its execution afforded little guarantee of its success for it was beyond human ingenuity or skill to synchronise the drop of masonry with the movement of the Prince. Such a crude method was not in keeping with that thoroughness and attention to detail for which Dhian Singh is rightly reputed.”

⁷ Honigberger, op. cit., p. 103; Smyth, op. cit., 305; M'Gregor, op. cit., ii, p. 6; Cunningham, op. cit., p. 245; *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, Vol. IV, pt. i, p. 70.

Clerk, the British Political Agent at Lahore, however, reported to the Government that Udham Singh expired after an hour.—vide Clerk to Torrens, November 6, 1840; L. 34/Bk. 150, P. G. R.

and injured,"⁸ and Diwan Dina Nath and some other dignitaries who "received injuries on their heads, shoulders and backs from masonry."⁹

The death of Nau Nihal Singh precipitated a crisis. The question now was as to who should succeed him. The possible claimants to the Punjab inheritance in 1840 were two persons: Sher Singh, a putative son of Ranjit Singh, and Mai Chand Kaur, the widow of Kharak Singh, who claimed to govern as regent on behalf of the expected child of her deceased son, whose widow she averred to be *enceinte*. Dhian Singh took up the cause of the former; while the chief supporters of the latter were the Sindhianwala Chiefs, Attar Singh and Ajit Singh, who claimed common ancestry with Ranjit Singh. For a time Chand Kaur's party prevailed, and as a compromise an arrangement was made whereby the Mai was publicly proclaimed pre-eminently as sovereign, or as regent for the still unborn child of her deceased son, with Sher Singh as a sort of vicegerent, and Dhian Singh as wazir. This expedient, however, proved entirely temporary, for within a short time the factions came to blows. Sher Singh besieged Lahore in January, 1841, and was proclaimed the Maharaja of the Punjab on the 18th of that month, the Sindhianwala family taking refuge in flight.¹⁰

The accession of Sher Singh, however, instead of making for some sort of stability in the State, made confusion worse confounded. Though he had at last succeeded in his high ambition of becoming the Maharaja of the Punjab, he was un-

⁸ Honigberger, op. cit., p. 104. He himself attended the Raja for this injury.

⁹ Umdat-ut-Twarikh, iv, pt. i, p. 71.

¹⁰ Steinbach, The Punjaub (London, 1846), pp. 26-29; Gardner, op. cit., pp. 227-239; Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 245-249; M'Gregor, op. cit., ii, pp. 6-11.

Smyth (op. cit., pp. 42-61) gives a detailed account of the siege of Lahore by Sher Singh.

able to govern. The clarity of mind, the sense of opportunity, the tenacity of purpose, the gift of steady application, which make the statesman, were denied him. While the State was passing through a most critical period in its history, the head of the State betook himself to voluptuousness. The result was that instead of directing events he drifted with the tide. His Government lost all control over the army which now virtually usurped the State. It overawed the imbecile rulers at Lahore through its delegates, the *panchayats* or committees of five, somewhat like Cromwell's army. These committees formulated demands for an increase in their pay and the dismissal of all officers obnoxious to them. On their demands not being complied with, they put to the sword many of their officers, and even drove away over the frontier Court and Avitabile, the European generals who had given them their remarkable cohesion and discipline. This critical state of affairs continued for some months, during which period there existed in fact no Government at all, the soldiers doing just what they pleased. The soldiers, at last tired of their own excesses, toned down their demands, and tranquillity became partially restored.

But this state of affairs was not destined to last long. The Sindhianwala Sardars, Atar Singh and Ajit Singh, who had made good their escape in January 1841, had not long after been recalled by Sher Singh, who had not only restored to them their confiscated estates but heaped on them fresh favours and honours as well. But they had neither forgotten nor forgiven their former humiliation, and were on the look-out for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance on both the Maharaja and his wazir, Raja Dhian Singh. A plot was hatched to assassinate Sher Singh, and the Sindhianwala Chiefs—Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh—succeeded, by skilful manœuvring, in making Dhian Singh a party to their designs. On September 15, 1843, Ajit Singh, under pretence of making an offering of a choice carbine, shot Sher Singh dead. The only words which the unfortunate Maharaja uttered before he

breathed his last were : "*Eh Ki dagha?*" "What treachery is this?"¹¹

Ajit Singh and his adherents followed up this crime by a massacre of a number of Sardars who formed the Maharaja's retinue. The assassins then repaired to a garden not far away in search of Sher Singh's son and heir, Pratap Singh, a boy of twelve, who was murdered in cold blood by Lehna Singh, Ajit's uncle. The Sindhianwalas then hurried towards the fort, meeting on the way Dhian Singh, whom also, after the exchange of usual greetings, the audacious Ajit shot dead. When the news of these dastardly murders reached Hira Singh, the son of Dhian Singh, he hastened, accompanied by his uncle, Suchet Singh, to the camp of the Khalsa army, and obtained their adherence by impassioned denunciation of the assassins and excited their cupidity by promises of large rewards. The Khalsa troops, with their sentiments having been thus aroused, laid siege to the fort, where the Sindhianwala Sardars had taken refuge. A heavy cannonade was directed against the fort: on the next day after repeated assaults had been repulsed, the citadel was carried by storm, and Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh with 600 men were put to death. Dalip Singh, a reputed son of Ranjit Singh by his wife Rani Jindan, who was then a mere child of five, was placed on the throne with his mother as regent and Hira Singh as wazir.

The long nightmare now seemed to be over, and it appeared that tranquillity would be restored in a country where death and destruction had been reigning supreme for the last four years. But this hope proved to be illusory: for only a short time elapsed before the army once again became uncontrollable, and renewed demands for the increase of pay and the dismissal of European officers, both of which Hira Singh was forced to comply with. Even these concessions,

¹¹ Smyth, op. cit., pp. 70-75; Steinbach, op. cit., p. 271; Honigberger, op. cit., pp., 107-108; Gardner, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

According to M'Gregor (op. cit., ii, pp. 12-15), one of Ajit Singh's servants shot Sher Singh, but this is not corroborated by any other authority.

however, were not sufficient to stem the tide of violence, anarchy, intrigue and assassination. Suchet Singh, envious of his nephew's power, now appeared on the scene as a claimant for wazarat. But he was killed in his attempt to supplant Hira Singh. No sooner had Hira Singh rid himself of this attempt against his power, than Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh, two reputed sons of Ranjit Singh, raised the standard of revolt; but Hira Singh proved too strong for them as well, and they were soon overpowered. Then when things were looking bright for the youthful Hira Singh, another revolution took place by which he was overthrown and slain on December 21, 1844. With him fell also Pandit Jalla, his tutor and *alter ego*, who had rendered himself obnoxious to a majority of the Sikh Sardars and soldiers.

The removal of Hira Singh from the scene of action resulted in confusion, and the State seemed to be without a responsible head for a time; but the power was gradually secured by Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, who was formally installed as wazir in May, 1845. But he was deposed and distrusted as a friend of the British by the Khalsa army, and when in September, 1845, it became known that Peshora Singh had been secretly put to death at the instigation of Jawahar Singh, his fate was sealed. The regimental Panchayats sentenced him to death, summoning him to appear before them on September 21, 1845. When he came, he was asked to stand away from the boy Maharaja, and a file of soldiers shot him. The act "partook of the solemnity and moderation of a judicial process, ordained and witnessed by a whole people."¹² Six weeks of anarchy again intervened, but in the beginning of November, Lal Singh became wazir, and Tej Singh was appointed commander-in-chief.¹³

¹² Cunningham, op. cit., p. 289.

¹³ The authorities for the preceding three paragraphs are:

Honigberger, op. cit., pp. 108-118; Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 280-290; Steinbach, op. cit., pp. 35-46; M'Gregor, op. cit., ii, pp. 16-21, 32-36; Smyth, op. cit., Chapters V, VI, VIII, X and XI; Gardner, op. cit., pp. 247-262.

In the anarchy and chaos that followed the death of Ranjit Singh, the British, who had for long been casting covetous glances on his kingdom, found, after all, a godsent opportunity to accomplish their object. That the annexation of the Punjab was envisaged by the British Government, which was adopting every possible means in its power to achieve that end, is confessed with brazen-faced frankness in Lord Ellenborough's private correspondence with the Duke of Wellington and Queen Victoria. As early as October 20, 1843, we find him writing to Wellington that "*the time cannot be very distant when the Punjab will fall into our management*,"* and the question will be what we shall do as respects the Hills. . . . I do not look to this state of things as likely to occur next year, but as being ultimately inevitable, if we do not bring on union against ourselves and indisposition to our rule by some precipitate interference. I should tell you, however, that there is, as there long has been, a great disposition, even in quarters not military, to disturb the game."¹⁴ On the same day he wrote to the Queen: "It is impossible not to perceive that the ultimate tendency of the late events at Lahore is, *without any effort on our part*, to bring the plains first, and at a somewhat later period the hills, under our direct protection or control."¹⁵ The Punjab thus appeared to the British authorities like a ripe pear destined to fall into their lap—a convenient rationalization of their imperialistic ambitions.

Ellenborough trusted that the "game" would not be disturbed until the British were ready, and wrote to Wellington on February 15, 1844: "I earnestly hope that we may not be obliged to cross the Sutlej in December next. We shall not be ready so soon. The army requires a great deal of settling up after five years of war. I am quietly doing what

*All italics in this book, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

¹⁴ Colchester ed., *The Indian Administration of Lord Ellenborough in his correspondence with the Duke of Wellington and the Queen* (London, 1874), pp. 399-400.

¹⁵ *Idem*, p. 98.

I can to strengthen and equip it. I am fully aware of the great magnitude of the operation, in which we should embark if we ever should cross the Sutlej. I know it would be of a protracted character. I should be obliged to remain at Lahore myself more than a year, and I should have all India to keep quiet behind me with very few troops, for we could not send any back till we relieved them."¹⁶ These and some of the following letters show conclusively that the British were not—as they then professed, and as is still commonly believed—mere passive spectators of the anarchy, but that they were, on the other hand, actively making preparations for the conquest of the Punjab. On April 20, 1844, Ellenborough wrote to Wellington:

"We can only consider our relations with Lahore to be those of an armed truce.

*"I earnestly hope nothing may compel us to cross the Sutlej, and that we may have no attack to repel till November, 1845. I shall then be prepared for anything. In the meantime we do all we can in a quiet way to strengthen ourselves."*¹⁷

Again he wrote to the Duke on May 9, 1844 :

"I expect that by the end of December there will be on the Sutlej seventy boats of about thirty-five tons each, all exactly similar and each containing everything necessary for its equipment as a pontoon. These will bridge the Sutlej anywhere, and when not so used they will convey our troops up and down, and save us an enormous charge for the hire of boats."¹⁸

The extracts from Lord Ellenborough's letters quoted above will make it abundantly clear that the preparations which were being made "in a quiet way to strengthen ourselves" were not of a defensive kind,¹⁹ but as an essential

¹⁶ Idem, p. 424.

¹⁷ Idem, pp. 434-435.

¹⁸ Idem, p. 437.

¹⁹ Even the writer in the Cambridge History of India (V.

part of the schemes of territorial aggrandizement cherished by the British in this country. But before Ellenborough could win the "game", which he hoped to be able to do at any time after November, 1845, the Directors, exercising their constitutional right for the first time, ordered his recall; for they "thoroughly distrusted his erratic genius: the tone of his despatches had offended them: they most justly disapproved of the policy in Sind, and they accused him of systematically subordinating the interests of the civil to those of the military service."²⁰

Sir Henry, later Lord, Hardinge, who succeeded Lord Ellenborough in July 1844, had won a great reputation as a soldier in the Peninsular War and in the Waterloo campaign. The appointment of a soldier as Governor-General showed plainly that the Directors anticipated a war with the Sikhs, though they did not desire that Ellenborough should wage it.²¹ The Punjab policy of Hardinge was thus no reversal, but a continuation of that of Ellenborough. "When Lord Ellenborough left Calcutta," Hardinge wrote to Gough on August 13, 1844, shortly after his assumption of office, "the probability of offensive operations in the Punjab had almost subsided into a conviction that the case of necessity compelling us to interfere by arms would not arise. On the other hand, such is the distracted state of that country, with a large army clamouring for pay and plunder, that we may be forced to act, and this necessity may be unavoidable at a very short notice. It is, therefore, not advisable, however strong the conviction that the case of necessity will never arise, to relax in any of our military preparations."²² We shall

p. 548) admits that there is "some point in the words of a hostile critic: 'To be prepared is one thing, to be always making preparations another.'"

²⁰ Roberts, *History of British India* (Oxford, 1938), p. 332.

²¹ *Idem*, p. 333.

²² Quoted in Rait, *Life of Lord Gough* (Westminster, 1903), i, pp. 368-369.

presently see what warlike preparations were made by the two successive Governors-General.

Until 1838, the garrison of Ludhiana and Subathu formed the only body of British troops near the Sikh frontier. But in that year 12,000 men were mustered at Ferozepore, which had passed under British possession three years before, for the advance into Khorasan, and a small division was left behind during the Afghan War. In 1842, a large number of troops were advanced to Ambala as a reserve in order to support these two posts of Ludhiana and Ferozepore.²³ This concentration of impressive bodies of troops on the Sikh frontier, contrary to the policy of 1809, coupled with the object lesson of Sindh before their eyes, convinced the Sikhs that war hovered on their frontiers. Then in 1844 and 1845, "the facts were whispered abroad and treasured up, that the English were preparing boats at Bombay to make bridges across the Sutlej, that troops in Sindh were being equipped for a march on Multan, and that the various garrisons of the north-west provinces were being gradually reinforced, while some of them were being abundantly supplied with the munitions of war as well as with troops. None of these things were communicated to the Sikh government, but they were nevertheless believed by all parties, and they were held to denote a campaign, not of defence, but of aggression."²⁴ The following table, which was drawn up by Hardinge, shows the actual changes, so far as troops were concerned, in the years between 1838 and 1845:²⁵

²³ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

²⁴ *Idem*, pp. 295-296.

²⁵ Hardinge, Viscount Hardinge (Oxford, 1891), p. 76. Lord Hardinge prepared this table in reply to an article in the *Quarterly Review* of June 1846, where the writer seemed to imply that Ellenborough had prepared everything and Hardinge nothing for a war with the Sikhs.

Post	Strength as left by Lord Ellenborough	Strength at first breaking out of war	Increased preparations made by Lord Hardinge
Ferozepore ..	4596 men 12 guns	10472 men 24 guns	5876 men 23 guns
Ludhiana ..	3030 men 12 guns	7235 men 12 guns	4205 men 0 guns
Ambala ..	4113 men 24 guns	12972 men 32 guns	8859 men 8 guns
Meerut ..	5873 men 18 guns	9844 men 26 guns	3971 men 8 guns
Whole Frontier, exclusive of Hill Stations which remained the same. ..	17612 men 66 guns	40523 men 94 guns	22911 men 28 guns

The Sikh army in particular, and the populace in general, naturally viewed with alarm this gradual encirclement of their country by British troops, and drew the natural inference that the annexation of the Punjab was not far off. In fact this belief was confirmed by the whole history of Anglo-Sikh relations ever since the time of Lord Wellesley, which has been thus summed up by Thorburn, a former Indian Civilian: "Though from the imperious Marquis Wellesley (1798-1804) onwards, no Governor-General had actively intended a conflict with the Sikhs, yet each in turn had contributed towards it. Lord Wellesley had sanctioned the pursuit of Holkar to within a march of Amritsar (1804-5): Lord Minto had confined the Sikh expansion Delhi-wards to the right bank of the Sutlej, and had established a British garrison at Ludhiana, on the left or British bank of that river (1808-9): Lord

Auckland taking advantage of the doctrine of escheat, had made Ferozepore a British cantonment (1838), thus directly threatening Lahore: Lord Ellenborough had used the Punjab as a military highway for Afghanistan (1838-1842), and in 1843 had nefariously seized Sindh, thereby anticipating the Sikhs and extending southwards the British coils about the Punjab from Ferozepore to the Indus.²⁶

This belief of the soldiery coincided, on widely different grounds though, with the interest and wishes of the half-hearted or even treacherous Government functionaries, e.g., Lal Singh and Tej Singh, who considered that "their only chance of retaining power was to have the army removed by inducing it to engage in a contest which they believed would end in its dispersion."²⁷ Moreover, in September, 1845, fifty-six boats, which Ellenborough had ordered to be built on the Indus, were brought up by Hardinge's order to Ferozepore.²⁸ Then, early in November, two Sikh villages near Ludhiana were sequestered on the ground that they harboured criminals; "and the circumstances added to the rapid approach of the Governor-General to the frontier, removed any doubts which may have lingered in the minds of the Panchayats."²⁹ This was the last straw; and thus egged on to hostilities³⁰ the soldiery assembled round the funerary memorial of Ranjit Singh, and vowed fidelity in the battle they were soon to wage. On December 11, 1845, they began to cross the Sutlej between

²⁶ Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War* (London, 1904), pp. 32-33.

²⁷ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

²⁸ Hardinge, *op. cit.*, p. 77; Rait, *op. cit.*, i, p. 377. Remark-
ing on this, Smyth (*op. cit.*, p. xxii) says: "To assert that the
bridge of boats, brought from Bombay was not a *causa (sic) belli*,
but merely a defensive measure is absurd."

²⁹ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

³⁰ Even Smyth (*op. cit.*, p. xxi), an outright advocate of the
assumption by the British of a "commanding attitude" towards the
Sikhs, remarks thus: "Regarding the Punjab war; I am neither of
opinion, that the Sikhs made an unprovoked attack, nor that we
have acted towards them with great forbearance."

Hariki and Kasur, and three days later a portion of the Sikh army took up a position close to Ferozepore. The Governor-General was marching to the frontier when he heard that the Sikhs had crossed the Sutlej. He lost no time in issuing a proclamation declaring all Sikh possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej confiscated and annexed to the British territories, and hurried his force from Ludhiana and Ambala to save Ferozepore within a few miles of which the Sikh army had taken up a position.

Soon after the Khalsa army crossed the river, Raja Lal Singh sent a man to Captain Nicolson "to say he would show his good wishes by keeping back his force for two days from joining the Infantry or Regulars, and had marched them to-day back to Assul, and would to-morrow to Hariki, if I would consider him and the Bibi Sahib (Rani Jindan) our friends."⁸¹ He also intimated to Captain Nicolson that he would divide the Sikh force, and persuade a portion to march to Ferozeshah to attack the Governor-General, and suggested that the British force at Ferozepore should attack the remaining portion of the Sikh troops.⁸²

And even as the parricide promised, so he did.

Thus it was that instead of pushing on at once to Ferozepore and there to overwhelm the weak British force, the perfidious Lal Singh led a Sikh detachment of some 2,000 infantry and about 10,000 cavalry, supported by 22 guns, on to Mudki where, on December 18, the first battle of the war was fought. There 'in a stout conflict' during 'an hour and a half of d'm starlight', the Sikhs were defeated with a loss of seventeen guns; but the British casualties were very heavy, amounting

⁸¹ Extracts from a journal kept by Captain Nicolson, the British Agent at Ferozepore (found after his death), forwarded with the MEMORANDUM relative to the paper given by Henry Lawrence to Raja Lal Singh as sanctioned by the Governor-General in the letter of the Secretary to Government, No. 166, dated the 14th May, 1846. Currie to Henry Lawrence, July 28, 1864; L. 2/Bk. 169; P. G. R.

⁸² MEMORANDUM, op. cit. See also Cunningham, op. cit., p. 306.

to 872 killed and wounded. The British troops then effected junction with Sir John Littler's Ferozepore division, and attacked the large body of Sikhs who were encamped around Fesozeshah, just before sunset on a short winter's day (December 21). The British made a fierce frontal assault, but two divisions were provisionally repelled and the Sikh line was only partially captured when it became too dark to continue the fight. The British troops "bivouacked on the battlefield, having lost touch with one another and being still exposed to a spasmodic and harassing fire from the enemy's batteries,"⁸³ and were "half outside and half within the enemy's position, unable either to advance or retreat. Regiments were mixed up with regiments, and officers with men, in the wildest confusion."⁸⁴

Hardinge, the veteran of the Peninsular War, said that he had "never known a night so extraordinary as this," and the Commander-in-Chief admitted that the British were "in a critical and perilous state" during that "night of terrors." The Governor-General continued cheering up his disheartened men throughout the night, and when morning came and the full extent of the destruction became known, he exclaimed, in the words of Pyrrhus, "Another such victory and we are undone!" The Sikhs had partially reoccupied their entrenchments during the night, and the attack on these was at once resumed in the morning; and a determined rush finally carried the entrenchments. Even so the danger was not over, for as the day advanced a second wing of the Sikh army commanded by Tej Singh appeared, and "the wearied and famished English saw before them a desperate and, perhaps, useless struggle." But this force mysteriously withdrew from the battlefield "at a moment when the artillery ammunition of the English had failed, when a portion of their force was retiring upon Ferozepore, and when no exertions would have saved the remainder if the Sikhs had

⁸³ Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* (London, 1883), i, p. 186.

boldly pressed forward.”⁸⁵ The Sikh cause was doomed, with traitors in command.⁸⁶ The British casualties amounted to 2,415 killed and wounded, and the Sikhs lost 8,000 men and 73 guns.

Having been thus defeated the Sikhs recrossed the Sutlej, but finding that the British, who had sustained heavy material damage and who were consequently waiting for ammunition and heavy guns to be sent up from Delhi, were loth to follow them, they crossed the river once again, and a portion of their force established a *tete du point* near Ludhiana. Sir Harry Smith was ordered to proceed to the relief of Ludhiana. At Buddewal, on January 21, 1846, the British army suffered a severe check, and nearly the whole of its baggage was captured by the Sikhs. But the Sikh troops were driven back across the Sutlej following their defeat in the battle of Aliwal on January 28.

The decisive battle was fought on February 10, at Sobraon, a village on the British bank of the Sutlej. The Sikhs had built up a position of considerable strength, and had constructed a bridge of boats in their rear to effect a retreat in case of emergency. But even this formidable position could stand the Sikhs in little stead, for they were basely betrayed by their leaders, who had colluded with the British.⁸⁷ After a violent cannonade which lasted two

⁸⁵ Cunningham, op. cit., p. 311. Gough wrote to his son on January 16, 1846, that when the fresh Sikh army under Tej Singh appeared, “we had not a shot with our guns”.—Quoted in Rait, op. cit., ii, p. 28.

⁸⁶ Cf. Honigberger, op. cit., p. 119.

⁸⁷ Cunningham (op. cit., p. 323), says that “the views of either party were in some sort met by an understanding that the Sikh army should be attacked by the English, and that when beaten it should be openly abandoned by its own Government; and further, that the passage of the Sutlej should be unopposed and the road to the capital laid open to victors. Under such circumstances of discreet policy and shameless treason was the battle of Sobraon fought.”

In the MEMORANDUM relative to the paper given by Henry Lawrence to Raja Lal Singh (referred to in foot-note 31, p. 28,

hours, the Sikh entrenchments were taken by storm. The treacherous Sikh Commander, Tej Singh, fled first of all, and managed to break the bridge of boats as part of a pre-meditated plan. His troops, however, fought like heroes. They "everywhere showed a front to the victors and stalked slowly and sullenly away while many rushed singly forth to meet assured death by contending with a multitude." Thrust back inch by inch, the Sikhs were hurled pell-mell in the river, into which they plunged, preferring death to surrender. Then followed a hateful scene of British butchery: "nearly ten thousand of the enemy were shot down by grape and shrapnel in the bed of the river which ran red

supra) the Secretary to Government wrote:

"Nothing more was heard from him (Lal Singh) till after the battle of Aliwal and two days before the attack on the entrenched position at Sobraon when Shams-ud-din (Lal Singh's confidential agent) went as from Raja Lal Singh to Major Lawrence and gave him an account of the position and nature of the entrenchment, and the amount and the disposition of the troops and guns which corresponded with that obtained from other sources.

"This information came too late to be of any other use than as confirming the intelligence already in our possession and according to which the plan of attack was concerted and executed."

This is confirmed by W. Edwards, Under Secretary to Government of India (with Governor-General), according to whom when the Governor-General was at Ferozepore "emissaries from Raja Lal Singh arrived and gave us valuable information respecting the enemy's position. . . . The Sikhs made a gallant and desperate resistance, but were driven towards the river and their bridge of boats, which, as soon as the action had become general, their leaders, Raja Lal Singh and Tej Singh, had by previous consent, broken down, taking the precaution first to retire across it themselves."—vide Edwards, *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian* (London, 1866), pp. 99-100.

Honigberger corroborates this still further. He says: "On the 10th of February, 1846, the battle of Sobraon took place, which decided the fate of the country. Tej Singh, the traitor, took to his heels, and, on passing the Sutlej, he ordered the bridge to be broken down, leaving the greater part of his troops behind in a helpless state".—Honigberger, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

with blood". The victory of the British was complete, but it was not gained without an enormous loss. The British losses were 320 killed and 2,063 wounded; those of the Sikhs amounted to many times that number, and 67 guns.

Here this narrative of the Anglo-Sikh war of 1845-46 must pause. The Sikh army was now defeated, but the war had been a revelation. Before it started the British authorities absurdly underrated the Sikh soldiery, which was "called a 'rabble' in sober official despatches."³⁸ Nothing "worse than a steady counter-thrust, pausing for a few un strenuous battles, was anticipated." But no sooner had the war begun than it became apparent that the British had been grievously mistaken. The remarkable military skill of the Sikhs was for the first time appreciated. The admiration which they inspired in the heart of the British Commander-in-Chief can best be expressed in his own words: "Policy," he wrote to Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister, referring to the "terrible carnage" of the Sikh troops at Sobraon, "precluded me from publicly recording my sentiments on the splendid gallantry of our fallen foe, or to record the acts of heroism displayed, not only individually, but almost collectively by the Sikh sirdars and army; and I declare, were it not from a deep conviction that my country's good required the sacrifice, I could have wept to have witnessed the fearful slaughter of so devoted a body of men."³⁹ Certain it is that there would have been a different story to tell, if the 'body of men' had not been commanded by traitors.

³⁸ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

³⁹ Quoted in Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 108.

CHAPTER II

TREATY OF LAHORE : MARCH, 1846

Treaty of Lahore—'Cow Row'—Revolt in Kangra.

Three days after the decisive battle of Sobraon (February 10, 1846) was fought, the whole of the victorious British army (except three divisions) crossed the Sutlej and encamped at Kasur. The first problem which the Governor-General had now to face related to the Government of the Punjab. The long-looked for opportunity to annex to the British dominion in India the kingdom of Ranjit Singh had at last presented itself, and undoubtedly the imagination of the Governor-General was warmed by "bright visions of standing triumphant on the Indus and of numbering the remotest conquests of Alexander among the provinces of Britain".¹ But it soon became clear to him that this long-cherished dream could not just then be materialized, as the British were at that time not in a position to effect the extension of their Empire to the Indus. Though the army of the Khalsa had been vanquished in the field, there were yet about 25,000 Sikh soldiers at Lahore and Amritsar, 8,000 of them at Peshawar, and contingents of varying numbers at various other places. The annexation of the Punjab would, under these circumstances, have entailed a series of sieges and a guerilla warfare—protracting operations into the unhealthy summer season—for which neither money nor men at the Governor-General's disposal (even including Sir Charles Napier's 12,000 men at Bahawalpur) were at all adequate.²

¹ Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs (Lahore, 1897), p. 322.

² The authorities for this paragraph are: Cunningham, op.

Hardinge *filis*, in his father's biography, gives the reasons owing to which the Governor-General did not avail himself of the golden opportunity of annexing the Punjab. He says that those "who cavil against Lord Hardinge's non-annexation policy, and who think, as Sir C. Napier did, that 'no Indian prince should exist', must put to themselves this question: Could the Governor-General, *with the military means at his disposal*, have achieved such a conquest after Sobraon? There was at that time a deficit in the Indian treasury. The hot season was setting in, while four general actions had palpably weakened the strength of our European regiments. Must it not then occur to every one that in the event of insurrection, such as occurred not long after at Multan, the presence of the British troops at Lahore, backed by the concentrated force under the Commander-in-Chief, would greatly facilitate the annexation of the whole province whenever such an extremity might become necessary?"³

The Governor-General was thus not yet in a position to annex the Punjab, however fervently he might have desired to do so. He could, nevertheless, as the best way out of a bad business, at least make a show of being moderate and conciliatory, paving at the same time the way for its eventual annexation by weakening it to such an extent as would facilitate its absorption in the British Empire as soon as the British were in a position to do so. To this end certain preliminary conditions were essential, and the Governor-General summed them up in a letter from Kasur, dated February, 1846: "A diminution of the strength," he

cit., pp. 322-323; Rait, *Life of Lord Gough*, (Westminster, 1903), ii, p. 81; Hardinge, *Viscount Hardinge* (Oxford, 1891), p. 123; Gough and Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars* (London, 1897), pp. 142-143; Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (London, 1927), xii, p. 390. Edwards is also of the opinion that the "annexation of the country was with the force, at our disposal, out of question."—Edwards, *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian* (London, 1866), p. 105.

³ Hardinge, *op. cit.*, 132-133.

wrote, "of such a warlike nation on our weakest frontier seems to me to be imperatively required. I have, therefore, determined to take a strong and fertile district between the Sutlej and the Beas. This will cover Ludhiana and bring us within a few miles of Amritsar, with our back to the Hills. In a military sense, it will be very important—it will weaken the Sikhs and punish them in the eyes of Asia. I shall demand one million and a half in money as compensation; and if I can arrange to make Gulab Singh and the Hill tribes independent, including Kashmir, I shall have weakened this warlike republic. Its army must be disbanded and reorganised. The numbers of the artillery must be limited. The Maharaja must himself present the keys of Govindgarh and Lahore, where the terms must be dictated and signed."⁴

In the main, as is evident, Sir Henry, later Lord, Hardinge was able to carry through this policy. On the 15th February, Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, who had observed strict neutrality during the late campaign, accompanied by several other Chiefs, arrived, on behalf of the Lahore Darbar, at the British camp at Kasur to hear the British terms. After a prolonged discussion the Sikh plenipotentiaries acceded to the preliminary proposals on the 16th; and on the 18th the British army marched to Lulliani, on its way to Lahore. In the afternoon of the same day the young Maharaja himself tendered his submission, and two days later the British troops bivouacked in triumph outside the walls of the Sikh capital. On the 22nd February, "a portion of the citadel was garrisoned by English regiments, to mark more fully to the Indian world that a vaunting enemy had been effectually humbled; for throughout the breadth of the land the chiefs talked, in the bitterness of their hearts, of the approaching downfall of the stern unharmonizing foreigners."⁵ The treaty was signed on March 8, 1846; the signa-

⁴ *Idem*, pp. 122-123.

⁵ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-332.

tories on the side of the British Government were Frederick Currie and Henry Lawrence, and on behalf of the Maharaja the signatures included the names of Lal Singh and Tej Singh. On the next day it was solemnly ratified at a darbar held in the Governor-General's tent.⁶

The Maharaja handed over to the British Government all territories lying south of the Sutlej, as also the Jullundur Doab (the land between the Sutlej and the Beas). A war indemnity of one and a half crores of rupees was imposed, but as only fifty lakhs out of this amount were forthcoming, the hill country between the Beas and the Indus including Kashmir and Hazara was also surrendered as an equivalent for the remaining one crore of rupees. The army of the Lahore State was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, and thirty-six guns in addition to those already captured were given up. The Maharaja also agreed to recognise the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories as might be made over to him.⁷ By two

⁶ Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 331; Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 80-83; Hardinge, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125; Fortescue, *op. cit.*, xii, pp. 389-391.

⁷ By a separate treaty between the British Government and Gulab Singh, concluded at Amritsar on the 16th March, 1846, Kashmir was transferred to the latter. This arrangement has rightly been censured on many grounds—mainly because it has been considered as tantamount to rewarding a traitor for his perfidy. According to Cunningham (*op. cit.*, p. 334), "the arrangement was a dextrous one if reference be only had to the policy of reducing the power of Sikhs; but the transaction scarcely seems worthy of the British name and greatness, and the objections become stronger when it is considered that Gulab Singh had agreed to pay sixty-eight lakhs of rupees (680,000 *l.*), as a fine to his paramount, before the war broke out (In a foot-note he adds that he 'never heard, and does not believe, that this money was paid by Golab Singh'), and that the custom of the East as well as of the West requires the feudatory to aid his Lord in foreign war and domestic strife. Golab Singh ought thus to have paid the deficient million of money as a Lahore subject, instead of being put in possession of Lahore provinces as an independent prince." This shows conclusively that the real intention of the British Government was

other important clauses the Maharaja was precluded from employing any British, European or American subject without the consent of the British Government, nor was he to change the limits of Lahore territories without the concurrence of the British Government. The British Government, on its part, agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the Lahore State.⁸

At the urgent request of Lal Singh and other treacherous Chiefs for the occupation of Lahore by British troops 'for some months', supplementary articles of agreement were concluded between the two Governments on the 11th March. The two main clauses of this agreement ran as follows:

"Article 1.—The British Government shall leave at Lahore, till the close of the current year, A. D. 1846, such force as shall seem to the Governor-General adequate for the purpose of protecting the person of the Maharaja, and the inhabitants of the city of Lahore, during the reorganization of the Sikh army, in accordance with the provisions of article 6 of the treaty of Lahore; that force to be withdrawn at any convenient time before the expiration of the year, if the object to be fulfilled shall, in the opinion of the Darbar, have been obtained; but the force shall not be detained at Lahore beyond the expiration of the current year.

"Article 2.—The Lahore Government agrees that the

to cripple the Lahore State by means fair or foul. Even the contributor to the Cambridge History of India (v, p. 552) admits that Gulab Singh was glad to be finally "separated from the State to which he owed everything, but to which it is difficult to regard him, in spite of Lord Hardinge's defence, as other than a traitor. What was clear was that the Lahore State must be reduced in size, that Kashmir was the easiest limb to lop off, and that such being the case Gulab Singh was the only man to whom it could be well handed over." Also see *infra* pp. 46-48.

⁸ Treaty between the British Government and the State of Lahore, concluded at Lahore, on March 9th, 1846—in Aitchison, Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds relating to India and Neighbouring Countries (Calcutta, 1892), viii, p. 160.

force left at Lahore, for the purpose specified in the foregoing article, shall be placed in full possession of the fort and the city of Lahore, and that the Lahore troops shall be removed from within the city. The Lahore Government engages to furnish convenient quarters for the officers and men of the said force, and to pay to the British Government all the extra expenses, in regard to the said force, which may be incurred by the British Government, in consequence of their troops being employed away from their own cantonments, and in a foreign territory.”⁹

Henry Lawrence was left behind as Agent to the Governor-General with Rani Jindan as regent and Lal Singh as wazir once more. The Governor-General, now Viscount Hardinge,¹⁰ now left Lahore to traverse the newly-acquired Doab, and to march back in triumph to Calcutta with the 250 pieces of ordnance captured in the late campaign, exhibiting them at every station and every city on the way as a conclusive proof of the signal defeat inflicted upon the Sikh army.

Even a cursory glance at the terms of the treaty of March, 1846, will show that annexation was the only point from which the British Government receded. For annexation was out of the range of practical politics, as it would have placed an unbearable burden on its over-taxed military resources and depleted finances. The British Government, however, covetously looked forward to the day when the Punjab would be a part and parcel of its dominions. And the treaty was the outcome not—as has been hitherto believed—of any magnanimity and moderation on its part, nor of any regard and honour for its friendship with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but of its desire to secure an effective control over the destinies of the Punjab. So the treaty sought to cripple the

⁹ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, viii. p. 164.

¹⁰ Hardinge received a viscounty and Gough a barony with pensions of £3,000 and £2,000 per annum respectively, for their services.

Punjab in various ways: by mulcting it of the fertile Jullundur Doab; by slicing off the hilly tracts of Kangra, Kashmir and Hazara; by reducing the strength of the Sikh forces; and by exacting an exorbitant indemnity. Thus having been territorially mutilated, militarily enfeebled and financially crippled, the Punjab could be easily absorbed in the British possessions as soon as the British considered themselves in a position to shoulder the responsibility.*

Treaties concluded and troops dispersed, Lahore was left in charge of a British garrison and a British Agent. But despite the fact that the general distrust regarding the conduct of the Sikh soldiery proved unfounded, there was still every possibility of trouble provided by the presence of the British garrison, and on April 21, 1846, the wanton and cruel conduct of a European artilleryman caused a tumult. The man, who was sentry over the outer gate of the artillery barrack enclosures, being infuriated by the obstruction caused by a wandering herd of cows, slashed them with his sword, resulting in serious injuries to three or four animals. The Hindus and Sikhs, who attach much sanctity to the cows, were naturally greatly excited at the news which spread like wild-fire and all the shops of the town were closed. Thereupon the British Agent, accompanied by his assistants, Macgregor and Edwardes, and attended by a dozen sowars "went into the town to explain what had happened to the

*That this is the only true reading of the treaty will be evident from the following extract from a private letter of Lord Hardinge which shows the real scope of the treaty: "*In all our measures,*" wrote Hardinge to Henry Lawrence on October 23, 1847, "*taken during the minority, we must bear in mind that by the Treaty of Lahore, March, 1846, the Punjab never was intended to be an independent state.* By the clause, I added, the chief of the state can neither make war nor peace, nor exchange nor sell an acre of territory, nor admit an European officer, nor refuse us a thoroughfare through his territories, nor, in fact, perform any act without our permission. *In fact, the native prince is in fetters, and under our protection, and must do our bidding.*"—Quoted in Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence* (London, 1872), ii, pp. 100-101.

people and to assure them of protection.”¹¹ There the Agent and his party were pelted with brickbats from the roofs of the adjoining houses. This was too much for the representative of the British Empire to pocket, and so he instantly asked the Darbar that the owners of the houses from which brickbats had been thrown must be made over to him.¹²

Next day, Raja Lal Singh brought the Maharaja attended by almost all the Sardars at Lahore to the Agent’s tent “to excuse themselves for what had occurred.”¹³ The Agent thanked the Maharaja for his visit, but told the Chiefs that he “would be satisfied when all the instigator of and actors in the outrage of yesterday had been delivered to me. The guilt of three of the leaders I observed was already fully proved; I, therefore, requested that their houses might be razed and the work commenced at once. The men themselves I observed would probably be transported beyond the seas.”¹⁴ When he had procured their arrest, he ordered the faces of two of the leaders to be blackened, and had them seated in irons in a spot where they would be exposed to public view, to serve, as an example to the people at large! “This and their house being pulled down,” Henry Lawrence wrote to the Government, “and report that they will be sent off to Ferozepore to there await the orders of Government will make some impression on the mind of the rest of the people of Lahore.”¹⁵ Three days later the principal offender, Dutt Brahmin, was executed,¹⁶ and two others of the more active delinquents were sent for temporary confine-

¹¹ Henry Lawrence to Currie, April 21, 1846; L. 56/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Henry Lawrence to Currie, April 22, 1846; L. 57/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ According to Umdat-ut-Twarikh, (v, p. 3) one more man—Rullia Missar, a resident of Lange Mandi—was also executed on the same day for the same offence.

ment into British provinces.¹⁷ A just and condign punishment indeed! while the European sentry, the source of all this trouble, was merely "warned to be more careful how he used his sword in future".¹⁸

'The storm in a teacup' as the British action over the 'Cow Row' can only be described, is a valuable commentary on the Treaty of March, 1846, and incidentally gives us a peep into the position of the Sikh Darbar. The incident shows a contemptuous disregard of the religious susceptibilities of the Hindus and Sikhs, a brutal assertion of superior might and not a just vindication of British prestige, and a brusque violation of treaty rights by an unwarranted interference of the British Agent in the internal affairs of the Punjab. We further see the ruler of the valiant Sikhs go a-begging to the British Agent to be excused and making a show of abject submission in the matter of punishments to be meted out to the 'culprits' of the *emeute*. It conclusively shows that already in 1846, the Punjab was firmly in the British grip* and a virtual appanage of the British Empire, and when three years later it was formally annexed to the British possessions in India, it was as if a ventriloquist were to throw aside his absurd doll and speak in his natural voice.

The 'Cow Row' occurred in April, 1846. In the following month Henry Lawrence had to leave for the almost inaccessible heights of Kangra in advance of a British force. This fortress was situated in the tract of country ceded by treaty to the British Government by the Lahore Darbar; but its Sikh commandant, with a garrison of about 400 soldiers, refused to hand over its charge to Lieut. Cunningham, the British Officer sent for this purpose in April, 1846, "until

¹⁷ Henry Lawrence to Currie, April 25, 1846; L. 60/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

¹⁸ Sir J. Littler, Commanding the Punjab Division, to Henry Lawrence, May 22, 1846; L. 62/Bk. 183, P. G. R.

* In this connection, cf. Lord Hardinge's private letter to Henry Lawrence, quoted on p. 39, *supra*.

the Maharaja (Ranjit Singh) himself should come and bid them."¹⁹

The hill fortress which breathed this proud defiance stands on a precipitous and isolated rock some four hundred feet high, and is connected with the main range of hills only by a narrow neck of land twenty yards wide. It was described by Henry Lawrence thus: "Kangra is a Gibraltar. It is five miles round, and has one accessible point, which is defended by thirteen gates, one within the other."²⁰ Vigne, the traveller, considered that it might be rendered impregnable by European engineers. Such a stronghold as this, if well-provisioned, could withstand any force not provided with siege guns, which, the commandant was certain, could not be brought to bear upon it owing to the absence of a road. It was this natural strength of the fortress coupled with the Khalsa pride that inspired the commandant to refuse its surrender.

The situation was peculiarly serious, for, though the garrison was small consisting only of about 400 men, it was feared that a dangerous example would be set if they were not brought to book soon. It was necessary, therefore, to proceed with vigour. The Lahore Darbar was warned that any delay in surrendering the fortress to the British

¹⁹ Henry Lawrence to Currie, April 13, 1846; L. 37/Bk. 173, P. G. R. When Henry Lawrence himself demanded surrender, he too was given a similar reply "when he (Maharaja Ranjit Singh) showed his own face, it would be time enough for them to open the gates of Kangra." Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 7, 1846; L. 66/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

I have discussed this, and the Kashmir insurrection (Chapter III, *infra*), in some detail, because both these, *inter alia*, give some idea of the formidable difficulties which the British would have had to encounter if they had decided to annex the whole of the Punjab to their dominions in 1846.

²⁰ Henry Lawrence to J. W. Kaye, quoted in the latter's *Lives of Indian Officers* (London, 1869), iii, p. 122.

Officer would be fraught with serious consequences.²¹ Thereupon Sardar Ranjor Singh, who had been sent early in April on escort duty with Lieut. Cunningham, was required by the Darbar to exert himself more strongly. But in reply to his *parwanas* the garrison said that "they would obey no *parwana* but powder and ball (*Gole-barood ka parwana*)."²² The strength of the garrison was estimated at 400 men, and there were said to be seven large and three small guns mounted on the walls, together with a number of jinjalls.²³ A few days later another attempt was made to acquire the fort without having recourse to arms. Missar Rup Lal deputed one Doola Singh to deliver a *parwana* to the garrison calling upon them to surrender. But in reply two shots were fired at him, "and he was told that that was the only answer he should have and that whoever should bring another *parwana* would be shot at once."²⁴

Henry Lawrence hurried to the spot where the situation was thus threatening to take a turn for the worse. He arrived there on the 3rd May, 1846, and on the 7th he reported to the Government that since the Chiefs²⁵ sent by the Lahore Darbar to effect the evacuation of the fortress had been unable to induce the garrison to surrender, he had asked them to leave Kangra.²⁶ In the same despatch he added: "I impute

²¹ Henry Lawrence to Currie, April 13, 1846; L. 37/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 3.

²² Lt. Cunningham to J. Lawrence, April 19, 1846; L. 39/Bk. 183, P. G. R.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lt. Cunningham to J. Lawrence, April 28, 1846; L. 50/Bk. 183, P. G. R.

²⁵ They were: S. Ranjor Singh, S. Attar Singh, Missar Rup Lal, D. Ajudhia Parshad, D. Devi Sahai, and Vakil Rai Kishen Chand.—Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 7, 1846; L. 66/Bk. 173, P. G. R. cf. Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 3.

²⁶ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 7, 1846; L. 66/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

cf. Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 4.

no treachery to Raja Lal Singh, but I am of opinion that there are other parties in the Darbar whose exertions in this matter have, to say the least of it, not been in our favour".²⁷ Soon after the failure of the Lahore Chiefs in their mission, Diwan Dina Nath was ordered to proceed to the scene of operations. The Diwan, though not keeping fit, left for Kangra on the 4th May,²⁸ reaching there on the 13th of that month.²⁹ But his presence, too, did not improve matters at all, and Henry Lawrence suspected that the Diwan was not earnest in his endeavours to induce the garrison to surrender.³⁰ The British Agent, therefore, informed his Government on the 19th May that the garrison of Kangra had positively refused to surrender.³¹ Four days later he reported that the contumacy of the garrison of Kangra was such that he saw absolutely no likelihood of their surrendering the fortress.³²

In the meanwhile the British Agent, with John Lawrence and Harry Lumsden, had obtained military assistance, and the British engineers, guided by Lumsden's knowledge of the country, had in a short time constructed a temporary road. Soon it became known that Brigadier Wheeler with his heavy guns was on his way to apply force;³³ and before the end of May, 1846, aided by the appliances of elephant draught, the heavy guns had actually toiled up the formidable ascent of that precipitous rock,

²⁷ L. 66/Bk. 173, P. G. R., op. cit.

²⁸ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 9, 1848; L. 69/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

cf. *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, v, p. 3.

²⁹ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 14, 1846; L. 76/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

³⁰ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 19, 1846; L. 88/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 23, 1846; L. 90/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

³³ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 19, 1846; L. 88/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

and were about to be dragged up into position. At the same time a deputation from the garrison had come out to negotiate terms. "I suggested", wrote John Lawrence in a graphic description of the event, "that they should stay and see the guns at break of day ascend the hill. They listened and agreed, but with a gesture which denoted incredulity. At four a.m. they were awakened by vociferous cheering. They started from their rough beds and rushed out, believing that it was a sally from the garrison. They were soon undeceived; for, a few moments later, there appeared a couple of large elephants slowly and majestically pulling an eighteen-pounder, tandem fashion, with a third pushing behind. In this manner, gun after gun found its way along the narrow pathway, and, by the help of hundreds of sepoys, safely rounded the sharp corners which seemed to make further progress impossible. The Sikh elders looked on with amazement, but said not a word. When the last gun had reached the plateau, they took their leave and returned to the fort. In an hour the white flag was raised. The garrison defiled out man by man, and, throwing down their arms, quietly took their way to the plains. Thus passed by what might have developed into a very serious affair."³⁴ On the same day (i.e., the 28th May, 1846) Henry Lawrence reported to the Government the surrender of the fortress, and recommended that the garrison should be made over to the Lahore Darbar to be dealt with as considered best.³⁵

³⁴ R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* (London, 1883), i, p. 202.

³⁵ Henry Lawrence to Currie, May 28, 1846; L. 96/Bk. 173, P. G. R.

CHAPTER III

REVOLT IN KASHMIR

Revolt in Kashmir—Trial and Deposition of Raja Lal Singh.

By the terms of the Treaty of March 9, 1846, amongst other things, the British Government demanded from the Lahore State a war indemnity of one and a half crores of rupees. Of this sum only half a crore was forthcoming; the Lahore Darbar, therefore, offered to cede Kashmir in lieu of the crore still required. This offer was eagerly accepted by the British authorities, who were in fact on the look out for an opportunity to separate Kashmir from the Punjab in order to weaken the Sikhs. As early as February 3, 1846, Lord Hardinge pointed out that it might be politic and proper "to weaken the territorial power of the Lahore Government by rendering the Rajputs of the hills independent of the plains."¹ But though the separation of Kashmir from the Punjab was considered desirable by the British Government, yet they were unwilling to annex it to British dominions in India. Lord Hardinge gave the following reasons for this in a letter to a near relative: "It was necessary last March to weaken the Sikhs by depriving them of Kashmir. The distance from Kashmir to the Sutlej is 300 miles of very difficult mountainous country, quite impracticable for six months. To keep a British force 300 miles from any possibility of support would have been an undertaking that merited a strait-waistcoat and not a peerage."² A later writer hit the mark when he summed up the whole

¹ MS. memoranda of Lord Hardinge, quoted in Morison, *Lawrence of Lucknow* (London, 1934), p. 157.

² Quoted in Hardinge, *Viscount Hardinge* (Oxford, 1891), p. 133.

situation in these words: "As the Punjab could not be annexed,³ neither could Kashmir, which lay beyond it, and which was in such an isolated position that it would have been impracticable for the British to attempt to rule and administer it with the Punjab intervening as foreign territory."⁴

Not to annex Kashmir was thus a necessity, and the British authorities lost no time in making a virtue of it. It was resolved that as a 'reward' "for the services rendered by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the Lahore State towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Government,"⁵ the kingdom of the hills should be made over to him. Accordingly on March 15, 1846, the dignity of Maharaja was conferred on Gulab Singh,⁶ and on the next day was signed the Treaty of Amritsar between him and the British Government, by which the latter transferred and made over for ever "in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh, and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the River Indus, and westward of the River Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahoul, being part of the territory ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of Article 4 of the Treaty of Lahore, dated the 9th March, 1846."⁷ The sum to be paid by the Maharaja, in considera-

³ For reasons already explained, see *supra* pp. 33-34.

⁴ Innes: Sir Henry Lawrence (Oxford, 1898), pp. 63-64.

⁵ "In plainer English, as a reward for his secret desertion of a failing cause"—Trotter, *The History of the British Empire in India, 1844-1862* (London, 1866), i, p. 72.

⁶ *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, v, p. 3.

⁷ Encl. 9 in No. 17, Parliamentary Papers respecting the late hostilities on the North-Western Frontier of India, etc. (London, 1846). Chamba was later on exchanged for Lakhanpur on Gulab Singh's request—Henry Lawrence to Elliot, November 22, 1847; L. 6A/Bk. 177, P. G. R. Likewise Hazara, at first included in the territory transferred to Gulab Singh, was afterwards exchanged for certain districts in the plains near Jammu belonging to the Lahore

tion of this transfer, was 75 lakhs of rupees,⁸ to be paid in two instalments—one of 50 lakhs on the ratification of the treaty, and the other of 25 lakhs on or before October 1, 1846.⁹ In this manner the modern State of Kashmir came into being.

But though the treaty was signed in March, yet it was not till November, and after great difficulties, that Gulab Singh acquired actual possession of his new province. The Governor of Kashmir in 1846 was one Shaikh Imam-ud-din,¹⁰ to whom orders were issued to surrender the province to the representatives of the Maharaja whenever they wanted to take over the charge. But the Shaikh was by no means willing to be thus summarily expelled. He went on shilly-shallying; and, as the summer of 1846 advanced, he openly raised the standard of revolt.

In an encounter with the Shaikh and his hill allies the Maharaja's troops were utterly defeated.¹¹ It was evident that Gulab Singh was incapable of driving the recusant Shaikh out with his own resources,¹² and that British

Darbar.—Agreement between the Lahore and Jammu Governments, May 1847; L. 99/Bk. 176 (or L. 198 (3)/Bk. 187), P. G. R.; *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, v, pp. 59-60.

⁸ The reduction of 25 lakhs was due to the retention by the British Government of the trans-Beas portion of Kulu and Mandi in order to rectify their frontier.—Governor-General to the Secret Committee, March 4, 1846; No. 16, Parliamentary Papers, op. cit.

⁹ In fact, however, only the first instalment and about 1½ lakhs of the second were paid by April 14, 1847, and the last instalment was paid as late as March 14, 1850. The final receipt for the purchase of Kashmir signed by the Board of Administration—the original draft of which is exhibited in the Punjab Government Record Office Museum—is dated March 30, 1850.

¹⁰ Ever since the annexation of Kashmir to the Sikh dominions in 1819, its administration had been entrusted to Governors from Lahore.

¹¹ Abstract of Jammu News, September 6, 1846; L. 22/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

¹² The Maharaja himself admitted this.—*ibid.*

intervention was necessary if the former was to succeed. Consequently the British Agent called upon the Lahore Darbar to carry out their treaty engagements and to deliver the province of Kashmir to its new ruler, warning it that in case of further delay being made, or of opposition being offered, in making over Kashmir to Gulab Singh the consequences would be serious.¹³ The Darbar was further categorically informed that the treaty of Lahore—under which Maharaja Dalip Singh was maintained in the Government of Lahore, and a principal article of which provided for the transfer of Kashmir to the British Government—would be ineffectual in the event of the wilful evasion of any one of its articles.¹⁴ Shaikh Imam-ud-Din was also informed that he must quell the storm he had raised, and cordially assist in putting Maharaja Gulab Singh in possession of Kashmir.¹⁵ John Lawrence was instructed to listen to no excuse for delay, and to take every possible step to compel the Shaikh "to come to Lahore without another day's delay."¹⁶ The Governor-General too asked his Agent to require John Lawrence to "peremptorily state to the Lahore Darbar, that the Governor-General is determined to enforce the strict fulfilment of the Treaty, and the British Government will give every possible support to Maharaja Gulab Singh in compelling the servant of the Darbar, Shaikh Imam-ud-Din, to evacuate Kashmir, holding the Darbar responsible for the acts of their officer in this gross violation of the Treaty."¹⁷

¹³ Henry Lawrence to Lal Singh, August 31, 1846; L. 13/Bk. 176, p. G. R.

cf. *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, v, p. 7.

¹⁴ Ibid; and Henry Lawrence to Lal Singh, September 4, 1846; L. 23/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

¹⁵ Henry Lawrence to Shaikh Imam-ud-Din, August 31, 1846; L. 14/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

¹⁶ Henry Lawrence to John Lawrence, August 31, 1846; L. 125/Bk. 194, P. G. R.

¹⁷ Currie to Henry Lawrence, September 25, 1846; L. 81/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

Henry Lawrence required the Lahore Darbar to place at the Maharaja's disposal from one-half to two-thirds of its force at every station between the Ravi and Attock, and to declare confiscate the property of all those on the border who would take up arms against him.¹⁸ The Maharaja was asked to look upon the affair as his own,¹⁹ and was exhorted to exert himself in "this, your own cause."²⁰ He was advised to combine mercy with energy in the coercion of the rebels which was to be done without the loss of a single day, and to offer amnesty in case of submission by a certain date.²¹ The Sikh officers and soldiers in Kashmir were informed that the British army had been ordered to support Gulab Singh, and that if they dissociated themselves from the Shaikh and returned to the Punjab, their lives would be spared and their arrears paid.²²

The troops under Brigadier Wheeler²³ were also ordered to be held in readiness to move fully equipped for field service from Jullundur towards Jasrota,²⁴ thus affording Gulab Singh a *point d'appui* in case of a second reverse. But though the Maharaja was badly in need of British assistance, yet he was particular that the British troops should only hold Nowshehra (above Bhimbar) for him and disfavoured

¹⁸ Henry Lawrence to Currie, September 12, 1846; L. 32/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

¹⁹ Henry Lawrence to Gulab Singh, September 24, 1846; L. 31/Bk. 176; P. G. R.

²⁰ Henry Lawrence to Gulab Singh, October 5, 1846; L. 67/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

²¹ Henry Lawrence to Edwardes, September 15, 1846; L. 137/Bk. 194, P. G. R.

²² Henry Lawrence to the Sikh Officers and Soldiers in Kashmir, September 24, 1846; L. 65/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

²³ These consisted of 6 Regiments of Native Infantry, 2 Regiments of Irregular Cavalry, and 12 Field Guns—*vide* Adjutant-General of the Army to Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department, September 17, 1846; L. 48/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

their marching into Kashmir.²⁵ Accordingly the Governor-General asked the Commander-in-Chief to order the Brigadier to advance immediately towards Jasrota, with the object of enabling Maharaja Gulab Singh "to move all his disposable forces on Kashmir by protecting his rear."²⁶ The Lahore Darbar also began to bestir itself seriously in equipping an army for Kashmir and the following troops were selected for that service: Two platoons each under Aman Singh, Dhokal Singh, and Kahan Singh, and six platoons of the Maharaja and his own troops under Sher Singh.²⁷ Ten guns and all necessary ammunition were also got ready at Lahore under the direction of Captain Brind of the Bengal Artillery, and various officers were despatched to collect transport and supplies in Rawalpindi, Jhang, etc.²⁸

These measures manifested the British determination to uphold the authority of the ruler whom they had placed upon the throne. Puran Chand, the Shaikh's Vakil, lost no time in seeing at Riasi Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes—who had been deputed by the Governor-General to keep the Government informed of the proceedings in Kashmir and to advise the Maharaja²⁹—and disclosing to him that the Shaikh had acted thus under secret orders from Raja Lal Singh, and could produce these orders in writing in his own justification.³⁰ This was grand news indeed, and Edwardes was em-

²⁵ Henry Lawrence to Currie, September 24, 1846; L. 43/Bk. 174, P. G. R., and Henry Lawrence to Currie, October 4, 1846; L. 69/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

²⁶ Lord Hardinge to Lord Gough, September 22, 1846; L. 52/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

²⁷ Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 8;

Henry Lawrence to Currie, September 29, 1846; L. 67/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

²⁸ Henry Lawrence to Currie, September 29, 1846; L. 67/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

²⁹ Henry Lawrence to Edwardes, September 4, 1846; L. 131/Bk. 194, P. G. R.

³⁰ Edwardes' private letter to Henry Lawrence, September 17, 1846, forwarded by the latter to Currie. Its receipt is acknowledged

powered to assure the Shaikh that "if he (as his Vakil declares he can) does prove the truth of the Vakil's declarations, the British Government will visit the offence of a Lahore servant acting under the orders of his Government, upon that Government and not upon him; and will ensure his personal safety, if without further resistance he abandons his desperate enterprise and delivers himself up to the British Political Agent."³¹ Edwardes accordingly promised the Shaikh that if he left Kashmir immediately and produced the written orders of the Lahore Darbar to oppose Maharaja Gulab Singh, the British Government would not interfere with his Kashmir property and the Darbar would not be allowed to call him to account.³²

by Currie in his official letter, dated the 25th September, 1846; L. 81/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

³¹ Currie to Henry Lawrence, September 25, 1846; L. 81/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

³² John Lawrence to Currie, September 30, 1846; L. 22/Bk. 174A, P. G. R.

This promise was once again repeated by Edwardes to the Shaikh on October 15, 1848, *vide* Edwardes' *parwana* to the latter—a translation of which was enclosed with Edwardes' letter of the same date addressed to Henry Lawrence; L. 193A/Bk. 184, P. G. R.

Edwardes was severely condemned for promising the Shaikh that the Lahore Darbar would not be allowed to demand from him a settlement of the accounts of his administration of Kashmir. The Governor-General observed, and rightly too, that "the misconduct and underhand intrigue of Raja Lal Singh (assuming it to be capable of proof) may not necessarily involve the Lahore Government itself, and the redemption of Lt. Edwardes' promise to hold Shaikh Imam-ud-Din free from all claim by the Government on account of his long administration (notoriously a most dishonest one in the matter of rendering accounts) may be found embarrassing."—Currie to Henry Lawrence, October 12, 1846; L. 85/Bk. 169, P. G. R. The Governor-General, however, agreed to "maintain the terms and conditions offered by Lt. Edwardes to Shaikh Imam-ud-Din as far as possible, if he shall establish satisfactorily the facts upon which these promises were founded, and upon the establishment of which the conditions rest."—Currie to Henry Lawrence, November 2, 1846; L. 115/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

Meanwhile Henry Lawrence had decided to place himself at the head of the Sikh troops, and hoped to be with Gulab Singh by the 14th October, 1846.³³ Brigadier Reed, Commanding at Ferozepore, received orders to move the force under his command to Lahore, so as to enable the forward movement from Lahore to take place, and Sir John Littler was ordered to move on to Sialkot with his troops.³⁴ Lieutenant Lumsden joined the Sikh troops at Rajauri to see that they did not halt short of their destination.³⁵ On the 11th October, Brigadier Wheeler, Commanding the Field Force, was ordered to move the force under his command to Bhimbar, and was on no account to proceed beyond that place.³⁶ He was, however, soon after instructed by Sir John Littler to cross his forces to the right bank of the Chenab,³⁷ the force under the latter being stationed on the left bank, ready to form a junction with him to advance on Bhimbar or Nowshehra when required.

This mobilization of impressive bodies of troops convinced the Shaikh of the futility of further resistance. It also detached from him some of his staunch supporters including Mirza Fakir Ullah of Rajauri who made his submission to the Maharaja on the 18th October.³⁸ Soon it was reported that the Shaikh was making preparations for his departure, and he actually left Kashmir on the 23rd October, though his preparations for the march were far from

³³ Henry Lawrence to Currie, October 4, 1846; L. 69/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

³⁴ Henry Lawrence to Brigadier Reed, October 11, 1846; L. 160/Bk. 194, P. G. R.

³⁵ Henry Lawrence to Currie, October 7, 1846; L. 73/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

³⁶ Henry Lawrence to Brigadier Wheeler, October 11, 1846; L. 161/Bk. 194, P. G. R.

³⁷ Sir John Littler to Henry Lawrence, October 19, 1846; L. 153/Bk. 183, P. G. R.

³⁸ Edwardes to Henry Lawrence, October 18, 1846; L. 195A/Bk. 184, P. G. R.

complete.³⁹ He pushed on to the allied force, and arrived in Henry Lawrence's presence at Thana on the 1st November, having been drenched in snowstorm. There he made over to the British Agent the three original documents⁴⁰ purporting to be instructions from Raja Lal Singh to Shaikh Imam-ud-Din to oppose Maharaja Gulab Singh, and to the officers and soldiers in Kashmir, to stand by the Shaikh in whatever he did. This disclosure made it impossible for Henry Lawrence to remain any longer in Kashmir; and as soon as Maharaja Gulab Singh had been established in power,⁴¹ he hurried back to Lahore, rumours of the disclosure running before him—"the Raja", in John Lawrence's curt cant, being now "in a devil of a funk."

When Henry Lawrence returned to Lahore on the 30th November, 1846, there was exciting work before him at the Sikh capital. The allegations of Shaikh Imam-ud-Din against Raja Lal Singh were very serious indeed; and Lord Hardinge, having determined that his conduct should be subjected to formal investigation, deputed his Foreign Secretary, Mr. (later Sir Frederick) Currie, to Lahore "to investigate in conjunction with Lieut.-Col. H. M. Lawrence, the conduct of Shaikh Imam-ud-Din, in resisting, by force of arms, the execution of the Lahore Treaty, relating to the cession of the Province of Kashmir to the British nominee."⁴² It was, however, apparent from the nature of the papers produced by the Shaikh that this investigation would

³⁹ Shaikh Imam-ud-Din to Edwardes, October 23, 1846, and D. Hakim Rai to Maharaja Gulab Singh, without date; Ll. 70 and 71 respectively/Bk. 176, P. G. R.

Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 11.

⁴⁰ *Vide* Ll. 78, 79 and 80/Bk. 176, P. G. R. These letters are dated late in July, 1846.

⁴¹ The Maharaja entered the capital of Kashmir on the 9th November, 1846, at about 8 A. M.—being the auspicious moment to enter the fort.—Henry Lawrence to Currie, November 12, 1846; L. 110/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

⁴² Governor-General to Currie, November 23, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

in reality amount to a trial of Raja Lal Singh.⁴³

The Governor-General gave it as his intention not to hold the Lahore Darbar responsible for the conduct of one or more individuals, when there was every reason to believe that the misconduct was to be "attributed to personal hatred and not to any political combination to violate the Treaty with the British Government." He declared, however, that the individuals, who might be implicated, must be held responsible for their conduct in that affair, whatever might have been the original object to intrigue. The Governor-General's instructions to Currie, therefore, were that in case the Shaikh succeeded in exculpating himself by establishing that he acted in obedience to the orders of the wazir, the Raja's deposition from the wazarat, and his immediate exile from the Punjab into the British territory should be demanded. "In the latter case," Currie was further instructed, "it is probable that the interposition of the Rani in his favour will be attempted, and that Her Highness will not consent to his exile without great reluctance. Facilities may be afforded, arising out of this state of things, to deprive Her Highness of power."⁴⁴ The following narrative will show how clearly Currie carried out his instructions.

Currie arrived at Lahore on the 1st December, 1846, having been met, some miles from the city, by Raja Lal Singh, Sardar Tej Singh, and other leading Sardars, who escorted him to his tent.⁴⁵ "It was no longer doubtful," wrote the British Agent in his report to the Government, "that an enquiry was to take place. The Raja and the Rani were in great distress; the former holding private interviews from morning to night, the latter consulting the astrologers, and

⁴³ For this aspect of the affair, a useful first-hand printed source of information is Sethi Ed., *The Trial of Lal Singh* (Lahore, 1933), a Punjab Government Record Office publication.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Currie to Henry Lawrence, December 9, 1846; L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

sacrificing to the gods in favour of the Raja."⁴⁶

On the next day a grand Darbar was held to receive the Governor-General's representative, who delivered there to Maharaja Dalip Singh a *kharita* from his chief, which, after congratulating the Maharaja on the peaceful termination of the late insurrection, pointed out the necessity of instituting "an inquiry into the conduct of Shaikh Imam-ud-Din and a full investigation into the circumstances he may adduce in justification of his acts in Kashmir."⁴⁷ The leading Chiefs were accordingly informed that the investigation would commence on the following morning, the 3rd December.⁴⁸

Since the allegations made by the Shaikh implicated the Darbar it was considered advisable to associate none of its members as judges of the Shaikh's conduct.⁴⁹ Nor did Currie favour the idea of associating other Chiefs who were not members of the Darbar; for, "in the first place it would be calling on the subjects of the Lahore State to sit in judgment on the acts of their Government, and in the next it would be impossible to find any Chief who is not a friend or enemy of the Wazir, and interested either in his conviction or acquittal."⁵⁰ Thus a Court of Inquiry, consisting exclusively of British Officers, was constituted. It was presided over by Mr. Currie, and had Sir John Littler, the two Lawrences, and Lt.-Col. A. Goldie as members.⁵¹ The Court was open

⁴⁶ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bl. 174, P. G. R.

⁴⁷ Governor-General to Maharaja Dalip Singh, November 23, 1846; Encl. 2 in No. 8, Parliamentary Papers relating to the Articles of Agreement concluded between the British Government and the Lahore Darbar on the 16th of December, 1846 (London, 1847).

⁴⁸ Currie to Governor-General, December 5, 1846; Encl. in L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

⁴⁹ Currie to Governor-General, December 2, 1846; Encl. in L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Currie to Governor-General, December 5, 1846; Encl. in L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

to all, and sixty-five principal Sardars were present during the investigation.⁵²

The Shaikh when called upon to make a statement courageously inveighed against Raja Lal Singh as the instigator of the Kashmir insurrection; and the three papers referred to above⁵³—two to his own address, and one addressed to his troops—were produced in evidence.⁵⁴ “The most significant of the papers, viz., that addressed to the troops,” reported the British Agent to his Government, “was acknowledged by the Raja; and the other two, though denied, were, in the opinion of the Court, fully established to be genuine also. The evidence, indeed, was most conclusive; the defence, miserably weak; and after two sittings, the Court, on the 4th instant, pronounced a unanimous sentence of ‘guilty’ against the Raja.”⁵⁵

The deposition of the Raja was forthwith demanded in accordance with the Governor-General’s instructions to Currie.⁵⁶ The Raja was accordingly deposed from his wazarat and exiled from the Punjab. His conduct while in power had rendered him personally odious to the Sikh people, and had alienated almost all his colleagues, with the result that with the solitary exception of Diwan Dina Nath no Chief had cared to defend him at the trial. Thus his exit from the stage where he had been occupying so prominent a place was unwept, unhonoured and unsung. The powers of Government heretofore exercised by Raja Lal Singh alone were now temporarily vested in a Council of four, viz., Sardars Tej Singh and Sher Singh, Diwan Dina Nath and Fakir Nur-ud-din; and circulars were issued by the Darbar

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ See *supra*, p. 54, foot-note 40.

⁵⁴ Papers on the Trial and Removal of Raja Lal Singh; Miscellaneous MSS. File No. 17, P. G. R.

⁵⁵ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

⁵⁶ Currie to Governor-General, December 5, 1846; Encl. in L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R. For instructions see *supra*, p. 55.

to all the *kardars* informing them of the wazir's deposition, and ordering them to obey no *parwanahs* which did not bear the seals of the above four.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Ibid; Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

TREATY OF BHYROWAL : DECEMBER, 1846

The Treaty of Bhyrowal—The Removal of Maharani Jindan to Sheikhpura.

The year was now drawing to its close, and the time was fast approaching for the departure, under the existing treaty, of the British troops from Lahore. Lord Hardinge, however, had for some time been contemplating the revision of this treaty in such a direction as would make possible the retention of the British troops beyond the stipulated period together with the tightening of the British grip over the country, and would thus bring the Punjab virtually under the British control. These sentiments were first expressed by him in his despatch to the Secret Committee, as early as the 19th September, 1846, where after discussing the advisability of continuing the occupation of the Punjab by the British troops, he added: "The other course—which it may be open to the British Government to take, and which has constantly occupied my attention since the 3rd of September—would be, to carry on the Government of Lahore in the name of the Maharaja during his minority (a period of about eight years), or for a more limited time, placing a British Minister at the head of the Government, and assisted by a Native Council."¹

¹ Governor-General to Secret Committee, September 19, 1846; No. 2, Parliamentary Papers relating to the Articles of Agreement concluded between the British Government and the Lahore Darbar on the 16th of December, 1846 (London, 1847).

Lord Hardinge was unequivocally against the retention of British troops under the same administrative arrangements as heretofore, whereby the British Government could not exercise any in-

The Maharani, who acted as Regent for her minor son, also strongly favoured, along with many influential Sardars, the retention of British troops in the Punjab. She had, in fact, in the presence and with the concurrence of such leading Chiefs as Bhai Ram Singh, Fakir Nur-ud-din and Raja Lal Singh, told John Lawrence in an interview as early as September 10, 1846, that the existence of the Government, indeed of her life as well as that of the young Maharaja, entirely depended upon the continued presence of the British troops and the British representative at Lahore.² In another interview the Maharani emphatically told Henry Lawrence that she had suffered much *dukkh* (i.e., grief) from the Khalsa, and that she would go with the British to Ferozepore.³ Even as late as the first week of December, she had not changed her mind, for we find the British Agent reporting to his Government in his despatch of the 17th December, that "till within the last few days, no one has expressed a more anxious desire for our stay than the Maharani; and, even on the day following that on which Raja Lal Singh was deposed from the wazarat (i.e., on the 5th December), and her grief was at the worst, she declared to me, when I called on her, that she would leave the Punjab

terference in the internal affairs of the State (*vide* Article 15 of the Treaty of 9th March, 1846); and in his despatches to the Secret Committee he expressed more than once the opinion that the British garrison ought not to remain beyond the stipulated period *if* a native Government continued to administer the affairs of the Punjab. But if the Darbar agreed to the modified arrangements as suggested by him, he would be willing "to give the experiment a favourable consideration." He was, however, bent upon making the Lahore Darbar agree to the modified arrangements, and thus reducing it to nonentity; and to achieve this end he spent all his energy, and exhibited all the subtle diplomacy he was capable of, as will be seen subsequently in this chapter.

² John Lawrence to Currie, September 11, 1846; L. 16/Bk. 174A, P. G. R.

³ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 10, 1846; L. 119/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

when we did.”⁴ But these repeated requests of the Maharani for the retention of the British force were based on the presumption that the British Government would not interfere in the internal affairs of the Lahore State.⁵ She was, however, disillusioned as soon as she came to know of the real intentions of Lord Hardinge who wanted the British Resident to be given unlimited authority in all matters of internal administration and external relations. No wonder, then, that the attitude of the Maharani underwent a marked change, and Henry Lawrence reported to the Government as follows: “A very short time has given a more active—perhaps, a more vindictive—turn to her inclinations, and during the last day or two her whole energies have been devoted to an endeavour to win over the Sardars of high and low degree, and unite them all together in a scheme of independent Government, of which she herself was to be the head.”⁶

But in her attempt to rally round herself all the Chiefs of the realm and to be proclaimed their sovereign head, she failed to win over any leading Chief save Diwan Dina Nath. This was due to the indubitable fact that she had been forestalled by the Governor-General, who had set the wheels of the subtle British diplomacy in great motion with the set purpose of thwarting her scheme, as it crossed his path. Lord Hardinge was determined to bring the Punjab under the virtual control of the British Government by placing the Resident on the same footing as the Lieutenant-Governor of a province in British India. This is fully borne out by the following sentence in a private letter from the Governor-General to his Foreign Secretary, who had been sent on a special mission to Lahore: “You are the person best qualified to ensure the success of a British adminitra-

⁴ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

⁵ *Vide* Art. 15 of the Treaty of March 9, 1846.

⁶ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

tion under novel and difficult circumstances in the Punjab and in such case *I should place you on the same footing as the Lt. Govr.*..... I have a very high opinion of Lawrence and next to yourself I prefer him."⁷

To achieve his object Lord Hardinge left no stone unturned. He knew that the Sardars would not sign their own death warrant by agreeing to the new arrangement, and he admitted this fact in the same letter where he said that the coyness of the Darbar and the Sardars was very natural.⁸ This should have been enough for him* to order the withdrawal of the British troops from the Punjab, as according to the existing treaty the British force was to be withdrawn "at any convenient time before the year (1846), if the object to be fulfilled, shall, *in the opinion of the Darbar*, have been obtained; but the force shall not be retained at Lahore beyond the expiration of the current year."⁹ Now it has been seen that the *opinion of the Darbar*, though in favour of the retention of the British troops *under the existing administrative arrangements* was, by the admission of the Governor-General himself, not favourable to the modified arrangement proposed by him; and the current year was also drawing to its close. In fact, however, the Governor-General was, as has already been stated above, aiming at not only the continuance of the British force at Lahore, but tightening his hold over the Punjab as well. But he would not plainly put his cards on the table by himself asking the Lahore Darbar to agree to the retention of the British troops in the Punjab, and to the unlimited control of the British over the country. He was anxious to give to the world outside the impression that he was reluctantly agreeing to the 'request' of the Lahore Darbar for the continued presence of a British force in the Punjab,

⁷ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 10, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Articles of Agreement, concluded on March 11, 1846.

and for giving the British Resident unlimited authority in all matters of internal administration and external relations during the Maharaja's minority. This ventriloquism of the Governor-General becomes crystal clear when we find him writing to his Secretary thus: "The coyness of the Darbar is very natural; *but it is very important that the proposal should originate with them*; and in any documents proceeding from them this admission must be stated in clear and unqualified terms; *our reluctance to undertake a heavy responsibility must be set forth.*"¹⁰ In another letter Lord Hardinge instructed Currie to "*persevere in your line of making the Sikh Durbar propose the condition or rather their readiness to assent to any conditions imposed as the price of the continuance of our support.*" "In the preamble of the Supplementary Arts.," the Governor-General pregnantly added, "*this solicitation must clearly be their act.*"¹¹

As a sugar plum to swallow the bitter pill of exclusion from all political power the Sikh Sardars were to be guaranteed the continuance of their jagirs, and the Governor-General expressed the hope that "the guarantee to the Chiefs of their jagheers by B(ritish) occupations, must I should think be a powerful stimulus to ensure their adhesion to the conditions imposed."¹² Sardar Sher Singh, the brother-in-law of the Maharaja, had already been won over by being entrusted with the charge of the Royal Palace; and Sardar Tej Singh, who was shortly after invested with the title of Raja at the instance of the British Resident, owed his position to a large extent to the British. The exile of Raja Lal Singh in consequence of his opposition to the British plans also served as a sort of warning to the Chiefs, and seems to have

¹⁰ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 10, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

¹¹ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal), December 12, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

¹² Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 14, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

filled some of them at least, with fear. But these artifices of guarantees, rewards, and threats to win over the Chiefs pale into insignificance before the Machiavellian duplicity displayed by Lord Hardinge in issuing instructions to Currie for making certain bogus military movements which would give the Darbar a hint that the British garrison was on the move. Below are quoted some extracts from his private letters to Currie:

"I send this by express to desire that the Regt. of N. I., the 2 guns and the Irreg. Cav. escorting Lal Singh may *not return to Lahore*.

"These troops will cross the Sutlege and encamp at Ferozpoor till further orders, and the troops ordered from Ferozpoor to Kussoor will be countermanded.

"*My object is to give the Lahore Darbar a hint, that the Garrison is on the move.*

"I also authorize you to send away another Regt. of N. Inf. from Lahore to Ferozpoor, there to encamp till further orders and not to be relieved by any other Regt. from Ferozpoor.

"H. M. 80th Regt. will receive orders to be ready to march for Meerut at any moment. H. M. 10th are at Ferozpoor ready to relieve them, but will not move up till ordered, nor will it transpire that they are intended to relieve the 80th. *These announcements will be made to accelerate the Darbar decision.*

"In selecting the 2nd Regt. of N. I. which is to march on Ferozpoor, the move ought to be made *by the Regt. which has the longest march into the interior of Hindostan.*"¹³

Two days later the Governor-General authorized his Secretary "to desire Sir John Littler to move all the troops out of Lahore (at) the end of the week, on the day you may judge to be the most expedient (except the 30th) encamping

¹³ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 12, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

them as near as may be convenient to the citadel." *In case, however, "this hint should be unnecessary by the temper of the Chiefs to assent to our views, it will not be made."*¹⁴

It was but natural that as a result of these contrivances the joint efforts of the Political Agent and the Foreign Secretary should bear fruit; and they were successful, in accordance with the wish of their chief, in persuading most of the Sikh Sardars to agree to the modified arrangements for the administration of the Punjab as proposed by him. Thus it was that when the Maharani tried "to win over the Sardars of high and low degree, and unite them all together in a scheme of independent government, of which she herself was to be the head,"¹⁵ she found all the Chiefs with the solitary exception of Diwan Dina Nath, opposed to her scheme. It was apparently as a compromise between the two parties that it was decided to ask the Governor-General to allow the British Agent with two battalions and one regiment of cavalry and one battery to continue for some months. Thus in the letter written on behalf of the Maharaja to Currie, in reply to the latter's letter of the 9th December reminding the Darbar of the time of the impending departure of the British troops and asking them as to the arrangements made by them for the future,¹⁶ after recapitulating each of its paragraphs, the following concluding paragraph was inserted: "As the Governor-General is desirous of maintaining this State, it is not proper that the whole of the British force stationed here should be put to further inconvenience and annoyance. Nevertheless, with regard to the necessity for establishing the Government of the country, and the fact of the time for the withdrawal of troops having arrived, it is hoped, that the Agent, with two

¹⁴ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 14, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

¹⁵ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

¹⁶ Encl. in Currie to Henry Lawrence, December 9, 1846; L. 135/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

battalions, and one regiment of cavalry and one battery, may be allowed to continue for some months, during which, what still remains to be done to complete the organization of the Government in an efficient manner may be effected; and there can be no doubt that Colonel Lawrence will, *according to the provisions of the Treaty*, give every aid and assistance in establishing the Government."¹⁷

This reply was at once conveyed to the Governor-General, who received it in the afternoon of the same day (i.e., 14th December). It ran clearly counter to his intention which was anything but to aid and assist the Darbar for some months more "according to the provisions of the (existing) Treaty"; for his doing so would enable the Darbar to organise their Government in such a manner as would effectively bar the possibility of any future British intervention. He, therefore, lost no time in reiterating his determination not to retain British troops to support the Darbar, and immediately wrote back to Currie:

"It is my positive determination not to employ a British Garrison in carrying on a native administration in the Punjab, of which we have recently experienced so many instances of inefficiency, injustice and intrigue. The proposal made of the aid of two Regts. of Inf., one of Cav., and one Battery of Artillery is *so absurd, that I consider it as equivalent to a desire to undertake the management of their own affairs without our intervention*. I will not consent to a force less in amount than 9 Battns. of Inf. —with the present force of Artlly. and Cavly. remaining at Lahore. The 9 Battns. may be reduced at the same time with other portions of the Inf. force to 800 r. and f. each, but those details are not dependent upon their consent. The sum to be paid will be independent of the no. of men

¹⁷ Maharaja Dalip Singh to Currie, 30 Maghar, 1903, (December 14, 1846); Encl. 5 in No. 0, Parliamentary Papers relating to the Articles of Agreement, etc., op. cit.

to avoid all cavil, and the force will be kept up or not to 10,000 men, as the British Govt. may from time to time determine.

"I would recommend you to take up your ground on the amount of force and the amount of money to be paid by the Lahore Govt. for its expense before you enter into other matters."¹⁸

While this correspondence was going on between the Governor-General and his Secretary, at Lahore developments were taking place with lightning rapidity in the course of the same day (14th December). The British representatives at Lahore had persevered, with admirable success, in their "line of making the Sikh Darbar propose the condition or rather their readiness to assent to any conditions imposed as the price of the continuance of our (i.e., the British) support"; for, no sooner had the letter on behalf of the Maharaja been despatched to Currie, than messages from various Sardars, who had been already worked upon, began to pour into the office of the British Agent disclaiming all participation in its composition. "Sardar Sher Singh," wrote the Agent in his despatch to the Government, "in particular, whose near relationship to the Maharaja makes it his strongest interest to do what seems best for the stability of the Punjab as an independent kingdom, applied to me for a private interview on the subject and sent me a paper explanatory of his wishes. . . . It proposed the unreserved committal of the kingdom to the British guardianship till such time as the young Maharaja comes to maturity; pointing out with much good sense the necessity of reviewing fairly the whole resources of the kingdom, and portioning out the jagirs, establishments and expenses accordingly."¹⁹

¹⁸ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp at the Bridge of Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 14, 1846 (5 P. M.), P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

¹⁹ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

This was exactly what the British representatives desired, since they could now declare that as they had not got "an honest expression of the wants, wishes and opinions of the great body of the Chiefs, who, during the boyhood of the Maharaja, are the natural representatives of the State," they were forced "to assemble all the Sardars together, and give them an opportunity of speaking their mind, unbiassed by the Maharani's persuasion and abuse."²⁰ The Maharaja was accordingly informed by Currie that "the request of your Highness" for the continuance of a British force at Lahore involved a departure from the conditions of the articles of agreement concluded on the 11th March, and that it would therefore be advisable that the members of the Darbar and principal Sardars should assemble, in order that he might declare distinctly in their presence, "the only conditions" on which the Governor-General would consent to a modification of the arrangements, and to the continuance of a British force at Lahore, after the expiration of the stipulated period.²¹

The fateful meeting was held on the 15th December, in the presence not only of the ministers and principal Sardars, but also of many "petty chiefs, officers and yeomen."²² It was at this meeting that the paper containing "the only conditions" of the Governor-General was carefully translated into Persian and Hindustani, and delivered by Currie to the Chiefs. The contents of the paper were as follows:

"If solicited to aid in the administration of the Government, during the minority of the Maharaja, the British Agent must have full authority to interfere, and to control all matters, in every department of the State, for the benefit of all connected with the Reaisat.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Encl. in Currie to Henry Lawrence, December 14, 1846; L. 132/Bk. 169, P. G. R.

²² Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

"A British force would remain at Lahore for the protection of the city and country, in such position as the Governor-General should think best adapted for the security of the force, and, at the same time, for the convenience of the inhabitants of the town.

"A fixed sum in monthly instalments must be set apart from the revenues of the country for the maintenance of this force.

"The Governor-General must be at liberty to occupy any military post or fort with British soldiers which His Lordship may deem necessary for the security of the capital, or for maintaining the peace of the country."²³

The Sardars retired for consultation, and, after some discussion regarding the amount of the contribution for the expense of the British garrison (which they decided should be reduced from twenty-four lakhs of rupees a year as proposed by the British Government, to twenty-two lakhs per annum),²⁴ these terms were unanimously agreed to *in toto*.

On the following day the proposed treaty was concluded at Lahore; and all the Sardars present, in number as the weeks of the year, signed and sealed the articles of agreement then drawn up.²⁵ On December 26, 1846, Maharaja Dalip Singh paid Lord Hardinge a visit at his camp at Bhyrowal, when the ratification of this new treaty was

²³ Note of a Conference with the Chiefs and Sardars of the Lahore State, on the 15th December, 1846.—Encl. 7 in No. 9, Parliamentary Papers relating to the Articles of Agreement, etc., *op. cit.*

²⁴ Henry Lawrence to Currie, December 17, 1846; L. 121/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 18.

²⁵ According to the Umdat-ut-Twarikh (v, p. 18), "*the Sabibs (i.e., the British) made all the Sardars of the Council and several other persons to write down that they were requesting and beseeching quite willingly and of their own choice and desire that they would maintain English troops and would pay Rs. 22 lacs.*"

announced by a grand salute of British guns. To any one endowed with prophetic foresight "that salute must have sounded like the boom of minute-guns over the grave of a once powerful nation."²⁶ A British force was to remain at Lahore, "for the protection of the Maharaja, and preservation of the peace of the country." The Governor-General was empowered to post British troops in any fortress, the occupation of which he might consider necessary. The Lahore State was to pay to the British Government twenty-two lakhs of rupees per annum, "for the maintenance of this force, and to meet the expenses incurred by the British Government." The Rani was deprived of all power, and received as a solatium an annuity of one and a half lakhs of rupees. The provisions of the treaty were to remain in force until the Maharaja attained "the full age of 16 years, or on the 4th September of the year 1854," during which period the administration was to be run by a Council of Regency, composed of eight "leading Chiefs and Sardars, acting under the control and guidance of the British Resident". The Resident was to have "full authority to direct and control the duties of every department;" his power was to extend over "every department and to any extent;" and he was to have "unlimited authority in all matters of internal administration and external relations during the Maharaja's minority."²⁷

Thus by the treaty of Bhyrowal the British Resident became the virtual ruler of the Punjab. It was indeed little less than the mantle of kingly power that now descended upon him. In an official despatch dated July 3, 1847, the Resident was reminded that the articles of agreement "give to the Government of India, represented at Lahore by its Resident, full power to direct and control all matters in

²⁶ Trotter, *The History of the British Empire in India, 1844-1862* (London, 1866), i, p. 85.

²⁷ Aitchison, *Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, (Calcutta, 1892), viii, pp. 166-170; and *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, v, p. 18.

every department of the State. It is, therefore, *politic that the Resident should carry the Native Council with him, the members of which are, however, entirely under his control and guidance; he can change them and appoint others; and, in military affairs his power is as unlimited as in the civil administration; he can withdraw Sikh garrisons, replacing them by British troops, in any, and every, part of the Punjab.*"²⁸ The Resident described the working of the Council of Regency thus: "On the whole, the Darbar and the Chiefs give me as much support as I can reasonably expect. There has been a quiet struggle for mastery, but as, although I am polite to all, I allow nothing that appears to me wrong to pass unnoticed, the members of the Council are gradually falling into the proper train, and refer most questions to me, and, in words at least, allow, more fully even than I wish, *that they are only executive officers, to do as they are bid.*"³⁰

In the Bhyrowal Treaty the duplicity practised by the British Government in India registered another great triumph, since in it the 'anxious desire' of the Governor-General for the continuance, in the Punjab, of the British troops along with the Political Agent was adroitly manœuvred to have the appearance of a 'request' emanating from the leading Sardars of the realm whose assent had previously been obtained by successful stratagems. The Maharani, the Regent for the minor Maharaja, whose opinion on the subject should have counted more than that of any other person, was studiously excluded from all participation in the negotiations which were to determine the destiny of her son, because she made an attempt to prevent the British octopus from extending its tentacles in the Punjab by rallying round her the leading Chiefs "in a scheme of independent Government,"

²⁸ Elliot to Henry Lawrence, July 3, 1847; L. 2/Bk. 171, P. G. R.

³⁰ Henry Lawrence to Elliot, August 2, 1847; L. 95/Bk. 175, P. G. R.

and thereby threatened to thwart the true intentions of the Governor-General. So satisfied was he with his Secretary's diplomatic management of the negotiations, that congratulating Currie on the satisfactory conclusion of the whole affair, Lord Hardinge bestowed upon him the following unqualified praise: "Your intimate knowledge of my sentiments, and the concurrence of our views in Punjab politics, have enabled you most successfully to realize all the objects I had in view, not only in the substance of the arrangements made, but in the form of the proceeding—for you have conducted this matter so judiciously that the truth and sincerity of the Policy cannot be brought into doubt or the Honor of the British Govt. suffer any impeachment. In closely examining this piece of diplomatic work, I cannot find that you have omitted a single point."³¹ But he put the greatest of all hypocrites to shame when to the person whom he had only four days ago asked "to persevere in your line of making the Sikh Darbar propose the condition or rather their readiness to assent to any conditions imposed as the price of the continuance of our support," he wrote as follows in the same letter: "The moral effect of the Sikh Chiefs *entreating* the B(ritish) Govt. to become the Guardian of their Prince, by the continuance of a British Garrison at Lahore and our *consent* to undertake the responsible charge must be felt throughout Asia in raising the reputation and extending the influence of the British character."³² With the same self-complacency and self-righteousness with which the British have always defended their occupations, annexations, or conquests in India, he then added: "Personally I may regret that it has not been my fate to plant the B(ritish) standard on the banks of the Indus. I have taken the less ambitious course, and I am consoled by the

³¹ Private Letter from Lord Hardinge (Camp Bhyrowal) to Currie, December 16, 1846; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

³² Ibid.

reflexion that I have acted right for the Interests of England and of India.”³³

We have seen that not only had Maharani Jindan been studiously excluded from participating in the negotiations which led to the signing of the treaty of Bhyrowal, but she had, by that treaty, also been deprived of all share in the government of the State³⁴—in which she had till then been supreme—, and given as a sop an annuity of Rs. 150,000. It was but natural, therefore, that she should hate the British Resident as the source of all her ills, and the members of the Council of Regency as the creatures of the British. She was, however, unable to do any harm to the British, as all power in the State was exercised by their representative at Lahore. But the Resident thought that she might as well be removed from Lahore, and was on the look out for a pretext which would give a semblance of justification for this step.

Early in February, 1847, intelligence reached Henry Lawrence that a certain Prema, an old retainer of Gulab Singh, along with some other persons, had formed a conspiracy, among other objects, to kill the Resident and Tej Singh, on the occasion of a fete at the Shalamar Gardens.³⁵ The offenders were apprehended, but there appeared no evidence whatever in the case which could—as Henry Lawrence desired—implicate the Maharani, whose munshi was alleged to have had various meetings with Prema.³⁶ “The evidence (in Prema Conspiracy,” wrote Lord Hardinge to Currie, “is so vague

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ This had been done in accordance with the instructions to Currie (on his repairing to Lahore in November, 1846), in which “the Governor-General stated his decided opinion that it was an indispensable condition to insure the success of the meditated arrangement, that Her Highness should be deprived of all authority.”—Elliot to Henry Lawrence, August 16, 1847; L. 23/Bk. 171, P. G. R.

³⁵ Remarks on the Prema Case by John Lawrence, without date; Encl. 4 in No. 9, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

³⁶ Ibid.

and indecisive by Lawrence's account, that nothing can be done . . . and I doubt whether it will be satisfactorily proved that Her Highness has interfered. With her loose reception of people around her and particularly Fakirs, it is no difficult matter to compromise her; and every vagabond when detected, in policy desires to save his own neck by plausibly pretending that he received his instructions from her."⁸⁷ Notwithstanding her innocence in the plot, he continues that "if we would fairly get rid of her, it would give the little Boy (i.e., Maharaja Dalip Singh) a better chance of being educated."⁸⁸

Shortly afterwards an incident occurred, which was advanced as an excuse to "fairly get rid of her." The Resident desired to recognise the services of fifteen Sardars by giving them titles of honour; and with this end in view he arranged that the boy Maharaja should invest them with titles at a full darbar. Among those who were thus to be honoured was Tej Singh, the erstwhile supporter and favourite of the Maharani, but now her particular aversion because he was serving the cause of her foes. The court astrologer having fixed the auspicious day, hour and minute for the installation—8-17 A.M., August 7, 1847⁸⁹—, the ceremony commenced. "All went off well", reported Lawrence to the Government, except for a momentary check, occasioned by the decided refusal of the Maharaja, to make the saffron "*teeka*," or mark of Rajaship, on Sirdar Tej Singh's forehead. At first, I

⁸⁷ Private letter from Hardinge to Currie, June 10, 1847; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

In a despatch to the Secret Committee also, he wrote in the same strain. "I do not consider", he reported, "that Her Highness ought to be held responsible for the acts of interference of her confidential secretary in communication with Prema, the chief conspirator in the plot to kill Tej Singh. The evidence is inconclusive, and I have rejected it."—Governor-General to Secret Committee, September 5, 1847; No. 9, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁸⁸ Private Letter from Hardinge to Currie, June 10, 1847; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

⁸⁹ Henry Lawrence to Elliot, August 7, 1847; Encl. 1 in No. 9, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

thought it might be bashfulness, or a dislike to wet his fingers with the saffron paste; but when I pressed the point in vain, and, on Sirdar Shere Sing's leaning forward, and begging the Maharaja to comply, His Highness folded his arms, and shrunk back into his velvet chair, with a determination foreign to both his age and gentle disposition'. There cannot, therefore, be a doubt that the young Maharaja had been carefully schooled by his mother, not to take any part in the ceremonies of the day, further than as a mere looker-on, but more particularly to refuse to have any hand in making a Raja of a Sardar she so much dislikes as Sirdar Tej Singh."⁴⁰ He then added: "I have before reported that I look for no contentment from the Maharani. I cannot conceive Raja Tej Sing now considering his life safe, while those who advised the Maharaja's conduct of to-day, are at his ear."⁴¹ Two days later he urged that the Maharani "should be banished from the Punjab, which she trouble."⁴²

"The adoption of such a step," Elliot wrote back to Henry Lawrence, "the Governor-General observes would, doubtless, be the most effectual mode of obviating all the present, and future, embarrassments which her presence, and her control over her son, cannot fail, sooner or later, to produce. . . Under these circumstances, the Governor-General has no hesitation in deciding that a case has been made out, both on political, and moral (!), consideration, exclusive of Prema depositions, *on which it is not deemed expedient to act*; and his Lordship, therefore, authorizes you to take the necessary steps to remove Her Highness from Lahore."⁴³ On the 20th August, Henry Lawrence reported to the Government that as the Sikh Sardars expressed their decided aversion "to incur what they consider the odium of participating in effecting the banishment of the

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Henry Lawrence to Elliot, August 9, 1847; L. 99/Bk. 175, P. G. R.

⁴³ Elliot to Henry Lawrence, August 16, 1847; L. 23/Bk. 171, P. G. R.

Maharani," he had removed her to Sheikhpura.⁴⁴ On the same day he issued a proclamation, "for the information of the Chiefs of the Lahore Darbar, the Priests, Elders, and People of the countries belonging to Maharaja Dilip Singh,"⁴⁵ which said that as "the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India . . . feels the interest of a father in the education, and guardianship, of the young prince," it appeared "to the Governor-General to have become absolutely necessary to separate the Maharaja from the Maharani, his mother," and that she had been accordingly removed to Sheikhpura. It concluded with the following words: "Let all ranks, therefore, rejoice, throughout the kingdom that the Right Honourable, the Governor-General of India has so much at heart the peace and security of this country, the firm establishment of the State, and the honour of the Maharaja, and his Ministers!"⁴⁶

As if her removal to Sheikhpura was not condign punishment for her 'misdeeds', her allowance was arbitrarily reduced from Rs.150,000 per annum to Rs.48,000 per annum. "By what reckoning", wrote the exasperated Maharani (on September 10, 1847) to John Lawrence, the officiating Resident, "do you make out my allowances to be (Rs.) 4,000 per month? I will take what was fixed in the treaty, and if any alteration is made it should be by way of increase, and not of decrease. Either do away with the treaty or observe it."⁴⁷ Earlier, in August, she had written to Henry Lawrence: "Surely royalty was never treated before in the way you are treating us! Instead of being secretly king of the country, why don't you declare yourself so? You talk about friend-

⁴⁴ Henry Lawrence to Elliot, August 20, 1847; L. 118/Bk. 175, P. G. R.

⁴⁵ Encl. 9 in No. 9, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁴⁶ Ibid. The Governor-General considered that the proclamation was well suited for the purpose for which it was intended.—Elliot to Henry Lawrence, August 28, 1848; L. 43/Bk. 171, P. G. R.

⁴⁷ Maharani Jindan to John Lawrence, 27 Bhadon, 1904 (September 10, 1847); L. 35/Bk. 186, P. G. R.

ship and then put us in prison! Do me justice or I will appeal to London. You establish traitors in Lahore, and then at their bidding you are going to kill the whole Punjab.”⁴⁸ In reply to these protests of the Maharani, Henry Lawrence was directed to inform her that “the act by which she was separated from her son was the act of the Governor-General deliberately taken . . . and that it now only remains for Her Highness to be resigned to the decision which is irrevocable during the Maharaja’s minority.”⁴⁹ The last impediment in their way having thus been removed, the supremacy of the British in the administration of the Punjab became now absolute.

⁴⁸ Maharani Jindan to Henry Lawrence; August, 1847 (no date is given), L. 33/Bk. 186, P.G.R.

⁴⁹ Elliot to Henry Lawrence, August 28, 1847; L. 44/Bk. 171, P. G. R.

CHAPTER V

THE OUTBREAK AT MULTAN

Outbreak at Multan—Deliberate Delay of the British Authorities to Suppress it—Advance of Herbert Edwardes.

Lord Hardinge relinquished his office in January, 1848, and was succeeded by the Earl of Dalhousie, who arrived at Calcutta on the 12th January, 1848. Unlike his predecessor, who was sixty years old when he assumed office, Lord Dalhousie was still young: he had not completed his thirty-sixth year, the youngest Governor-General who had hitherto held office. On the eve of his departure from India, Hardinge boasted complacently of the lull that prevailed not only in the Punjab, but in all India, and assured the new Governor-General that "it should not be necessary to fire a gun in India for seven years to come."¹ He could say this with all the more confidence because the British army, even after a recent reduction of 50,000 men, was still 70,000 stronger than at the last Indian peace. Nor was this permanent strength that of additional numbers alone, but it was the strength of strategic positions also. 50,000 men and 60 guns had been permanently posted in strategic positions on both sides of the Sutlej. A standing army of some 9,000 men held the Sikh capital, and about the same number were at Ferozepore—Both forces being ready to be moved anywhere in the Punjab almost at a day's notice. Not only had the frontier force been strengthened, but its old rival had also been considerably weakened. The Sikh army, which four years previously had amounted to 85,000 men and 350 guns, within two days' march of the

¹ Quoted in Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* (London, 1883), i, pp. 245-246.

British frontier, was reduced to 24,000 men and 50 guns, scattered in remote detachments.²

In these favourable circumstances, then, did Lord Dalhousie assume the reins of office, and "the augurs of the modern day welcomed the new Viceroy (*sic.*) in the press of either country, and presaged for him fortune and the closed gates of Janus."³ "Everything seems," said one journalist, "to favour the new ruler. Light dawns from all quarters upon his path. India is in the full enjoyment of a peace, which, humanly speaking, there seems nothing to disturb."⁴ "He arrives at a time," wrote another, "when the last obstacle to the complete, and apparently the final, pacification of India has been removed, when the only remaining army which could create alarm has been dissolved, and the peace of the country rests upon the firmest and most permanent basis. The chiefs whose ambition or hostility have been the source of disquietude to his predecessors have one and all been disarmed. Not a shot is fired from the Indus to Cape Comorin against our will."⁵ But events belied this wishful thinking, and the seven years, which Lord Hardinge assured would be years of lasting peace, were, from the very start, years of war. Hardly had four months of the new regime passed in peace, when the dream of years of tranquillity was rudely disturbed by a comparatively insignificant outbreak at Multan, on the south-west frontier of the Punjab, but which eventually led to the absorption of the Punjab in British dominions.

Multan was added in 1818 to the Sikh kingdom by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, for whom it had been held by Diwan Sawan Mal since 1821. On Sawan Mal's death in 1844, his eldest son, Mul Raj, was confirmed in the Governorship of

² All these figures are on the authority of Arnold, Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration (London, 1862), i, pp. 54-57.

³ Arnold, *op. cit.*, i, p. 58.

⁴ Morning Herald, quoted in *idem* i, p. 58.

⁵ Friend of India, January 20, 1848, quoted in *idem*, i, pp. 59-60.

Multan, on condition of paying a *nazrana* (succession fee) of 30 lakhs of rupees to the Lahore Darbar. But due to the absence of regular Government at Lahore, Mul Raj did not pay any portion of this amount. On the mediation of the British Resident, it was agreed in 1846 that the Diwan should pay twenty lakhs in all on account of the *nazrana* and for his arrears, that he should give up all lands north of the Ravi comprising one-third of the province hitherto under his charge, and that the revenue of the district still held by him should be raised in amount by more than one-third for the three years beginning with the *kharif* of 1847.⁶ But soon new difficulties, mainly of British creation, arose in the Diwan's way which made his lot so hard and intolerable as to force him to resign his office. As has been seen in the last chapter, the treaty of Bhyrowal gave the British Resident full authority to control and guide the administration of the Punjab. Under his influence the ancient system of octroi duties in the Punjab was done away with, and some articles of trade were declared to be duty free. There was a clamour for the introduction of the new system in Multan also, and as this was sure to affect his income still more adversely, Mul Raj requested that his revenue should be lowered. But John Lawrence, the officiating Resident⁷ refused to consider any modification of the demand. The main trouble, however, arose over the introduction of the practice of making appeals to the British Resident against his decisions. Mul Raj considered his personal honour involved, as this practice was calculated to lower him in the eyes of his subjects.

Accordingly, Mul Raj came to Lahore in December 1847, and tendered his resignation on the 18th of that month. But John Lawrence pressed him to carry on the administration

⁶ John Lawrence to Currie, November 3, 1846; L. 143/Bk. 174, P. G. R.

⁷ Henry Lawrence left Lahore on November 30, 1847, on sick leave, handing over the charge of his office to John Lawrence, who officiated as Resident, Lahore, pending the arrival of his successor, Sir Frederick Currie, on March 6, 1848.

of Multan till at least March 10, 1848; firstly, because John Lawrence thought that it would be impossible for the new Governor to realise the revenues from Multan in the middle of the harvesting season, and secondly, because he preferred that the Diwan should continue "to hold Multan for another year, for the rest of the Punjab will afford ample occupation for all our energies for that period. *Hereafter it will be well to get rid of the Diwan.*"⁸ Mul Raj acquiesced in this arrangement, only stipulating that the British Resident "would keep his resignation a profound secret, until the winter revenue had been paid; otherwise he would have much difficulty in collecting it."⁹ This promise was readily given by John Lawrence, who at the same time also submitted to the Government of India, proposals for the deputation of two British officers—Messrs. Cocks and Agnew—to Multan to master the details of the administration of that province before Diwan Mul Raj resigned. "By the present arrangement," he wrote to the Government, "we have ample time to make every possible arrangement for the good government of Multan. My belief is, that, under an able executive officer, it will yield more revenue to the Darbar than it now does, with a large relief to the people. There is not only no man at Lahore who possesses these talents, there is not one who has even a conception of the duties which would be required of him. *I would therefore, propose to depute two assistants, one of whom to be permanently located in Multan, and have charge of the province. A Sikh Chief should accompany, to command the troops under him.*"¹⁰

As the appointment of John Lawrence as Resident at Lahore was only a make-shift arrangement, the Secretary to the Government wrote back to him to suspend any proceedings

⁸ John Lawrence to Elliot, December 16, 1847; Encl. I in No. 20, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49)

⁹ John Lawrence to Elliot, December 27, 1847; L. 22/Bk. 177, P. G. R.

¹⁰ Ibid.

he might contemplate "consequent on the Diwan's declaration, in order that Sir F. Currie (the permanent incumbent), on his arrival at Lahore, may issue such orders upon the occasion as he may consider expedient."¹¹ Currie took over the charge of the office of the Resident from John Lawrence on March 6, 1848,¹² and he at once proceeded to make arrangements for the government of Multan. He met the Darbar, and disclosed to its members the arrangements regarding Multan which John Lawrence had made with Mul Raj over their heads. The members of the Darbar had to accept the British proposal to nominate "a Sardar as Nazim of Multan who would superintend the administration of the province in all Departments on the part of the Darbar on a fixed salary (Rs. 30,000 per annum) *to act in conjunction and by the advice of a British Political Agent.*"¹³ The post of Nazim was first offered to Sardar Shamsheer Singh Sindhanwala, but was finally conferred on Sardar Kahan Singh Man—"an officer, who will be more amenable to advice than Sardar Shamsheer Singh and will, I (i.e., Currie) am satisfied, be guided in everything by British counsels."¹⁴ The post of Political Agent at Multan was to be filled by Mr. P.A. Vans Agnew, and since *his duties "will be very arduous, as General Kahan Singh Man's will be almost nominal and the administration will be really conducted by the British Agent though in the name and with the instrumentality of the General and his subordinates,"* Lieutenant Anderson was appointed to assist him at Multan.¹⁵

The two British officers and Sardar Kahan Singh travel-

¹¹ Elliot to John Lawrence, January 14, 1848; L. 5/Bk. 172, P. G. R.

¹² Currie to Elliot, March 6, 1848; No. 4/W. E. 11. 3. 1848, P. G. R.

¹³ Currie to Elliot, April 6, 1848; No. 202/W. E. 8. 4. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

ling by water¹⁶ arrived at Multan on the 18th April, and encamped at the Idgah—a spacious building about half a mile from the fort. Mul Raj visited the Idgah twice during that day, and it was arranged that he should make over the fort to the new Governor next morning. The ceremony of taking over the fort was accordingly gone through on the morning of the 19th, when the keys were handed over to the new Governor, who posted at different places fresh sentries from the Gurkha regiment brought from Lahore. The old garrison was then addressed by the two British officers who tried to remove their fear of being thrown out of employment by assuring them of their old positions. All arrangements being complete, the party—Mul Raj among them—set out on horseback to return to the Idgah. As the cavalcade came out of the Sikhi Gate of the fort and was crossing the bridge over the ditch, the zeal of a peon of Vans Agnew (Keshowram by name) resulted in a sudden attack on his master. “A sepoy of Mul Raj’s was sitting in the first gate. Mr. Agnew was then on horseback, and Keshowram, the peon, who was following him gave the man a push, and said, ‘Why do you not get up and make a salute when a Sardar is passing?’—whereupon the sepoy started up and made a thrust at Mr. Agnew with a small spear which had been lying by his side.”¹⁷ Agnew was consequently knocked off his horse, and severely wounded. Mul Raj, afraid of his own life, rode off to the Am-Khas, his garden-house. Lieutenant Anderson too instantly galloped off to fetch the Darbar troops,¹⁸ but was followed by some ten horsemen who wounded him pretty sharply. Meanwhile Agnew was with great difficulty rescued

¹⁶ But their Sikh escort of about 1,400 soldiers, 600 Gurkhas, some 700 cavalry, and 6 guns, marched by land.

¹⁷ Statement of Ibrahim Khan, a native of Satara and a servant of Lieutenant Anderson, made before the Resident at Satara, who transmitted it to Mr. A. Mallet, Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government, who in turn forwarded it to Sir F. Currie on the 18th December, 1848.—*vide* Nos. 2301-2302/W. E. 30. 12. 1848, P.G.R.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

by Kahan Singh and Ram Rang, Mul Raj's brother-in-law, who carried him back to the Idgah on an elephant. Anderson too was picked up by some of his own Gurkha soldiers, who put him on a litter and conveyed him to the same place, where the wounds of both the officers were dressed.

Agnew immediately proceeded to report what had occurred to the Resident at Lahore, and at the same time sent a messenger with a note asking for aid, addressed to "General Cortlandt (an officer of the Sikh army), or Lieutenant Edwardes, Bannu."¹⁹ He also sent a letter informing Diwan Mul Raj that he was convinced that the Diwan was in no manner to blame for the unfortunate events, but asking him to arrest the perpetrators of the outrage and to present himself at the Idgah as the best method of exonerating himself.²⁰ Mul Raj sent back a reply saying that he would come at 3 P. M. when he would also bring the delinquents with him. But shortly afterwards, he sent, through Raizada Tulsi Ram, a verbal message to say "that he could neither give up the guilty nor come himself; that he and Ram Rang had already tried to do so, had been stopped by the soldiers, and Ram Rang severely wounded for advising the visit; that all the garrison, Hindu and Muhammadan, were in rebellion, and the British officers had better see to their own safety."²¹ In

¹⁹ A facsimile of these letters is found in Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier* (London, 1851), ii, facing p. 77.

²⁰ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 64; Statement of Ibrahim Khan, *op. cit.*; Statement of Jamadar Kesra Singh, servant of Mr. Vans Agnew, preserved in the India Office Records, London, and quoted by Dr. K. C. Khanna in a paper on 'The Multan Outbreak of April 1848,' published in the *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society* for December, 1933, pp. 166-174.

Pir Ibrahim Khan, the British Agent at Bahawalpur, wrote that "*from the tenor of his (i.e., Agnew's letter addressed to the Pir) and the reports I heard, it did not appear that Mul Raj himself was in fault, but it was equally evident that his soldiers were bent on war*".—Pir Ibrahim Khan, *Memoir* (London, 1852), p. 17.

²¹ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 64.

This is exactly what the servants of the British officers also said in their statements, referred to above.

reply Agnew reiterated what he had previously communicated to Mul Raj, and again asked for the immediate presence of the Diwan at the Idgah. When Tulsi Ram returned to the Am-Khas, he found the Diwan a prisoner in the hands of his soldiery who, imbued as they were by a love of freedom and a spirit of patriotism, had risen as one man in rebellion against anticipated British interference. It was thus almost impossible to send a reply to Agnew, who sent some more messages of a similar nature on that day as well as on the next, but none of which was received by the Diwan as his communication with the British officers had been intercepted by the soldiers. Mul Raj was now invested with the leadership of the revolt, the soldiers belonging to different communities vowed fidelity to stand by him, and a war-bracelet was fastened on his wrist. All this happened on the 19th April. On the next day, the troops which had accompanied the British officers from Lahore also joined the Multan garrison. No sooner had this become known than an over-zealous rabble rushed towards the Idgah, and killed the two British officers. Sardar Kahan Singh Man, who remained with the two officers to the last, was made a prisoner. When Mul Raj heard of the murder of Agnew and Anderson, he "was angry with his people for killing the two sahibs."²² He could do little more than this, for he was a free agent no longer.

From the foregoing account it will be seen that there is not the least evidence to connect Mul Raj with the first attack, or the subsequent murder. We learn from the statements of the servants of the murdered officers that Agnew did not consider Mul Raj to be in any way responsible for what had oc-

²² Statement of Ibrahim Khan, *op. cit.*

²³ While giving evidence in the trial of Mul Raj, in answer to the Prosecution Counsel's question "You had described Mul Raj's being coerced. How long did this last?" Tulsi Ram replied: "The soldiers confined Mul Raj three days in the house—one day on which the gentlemen were wounded, one day the day they were killed, and one day after it".—Kohli Ed., *Trial of Diwan Mul Raj* (Lahore, 1932), p. 116.

curred. This is further supported by the letter addressed, after the two officers had been killed, by the insurgent Chiefs to the troops under Edwardes, which conclusively shows that the events narrated above took place against the wish of Mul Raj.²⁴ The outbreak at Multan, which was sudden and not premeditated, was essentially the work of the Multan soldiery against anticipated English domination in Multan. They viewed with natural apprehension the dispossession of Mul Raj, their respected and loved leader. But what infuriated them was the spectacle of foreigners coming to wrest from the Diwan the Government of the province of Multan—which had almost become his legal inheritance, his house having so ably carried on the administration of the province for a period of about 28 years—, and to place it in the hands of a successor who, none in Multan had any doubt, was selected merely because he would hold the candle for the British. The removal of Mul Raj from the Nizamat of Multan was odious to the soldiery on personal grounds as well: for it would lead, as it had led everywhere in the Punjab under the British influence, to the dismissal of a large number of them. They thus rose in rebellion against the foreigners, and proceeded with the ceremony of investing the unwilling Diwan with the leadership of the rebellion. However much he might dislike being associated with the outbreak,²⁵ Mul Raj could not refuse, on pain of death, the leadership of the rebellion forced on him. But though the 'unhappy victim of circumstances'—as Mul Raj can only be described—was formally declared leader of the rebellion, he had (as has already been shown above) nothing to do with the first assault or the subsequent murder, both

²⁴ Encl. in Edwardes to Currie, April 27, 1848; L. 27/Bk. 191, P. G. R.

²⁵ Mul Raj's interest lay in not having anything to do with the rebellion, for (as stated by Captain Hamilton, his defence counsel) "he stood high in the opinion of those in authority, and had expectations of a provision from the Government, expectations which could not be realized if he showed any opposition to its wishes."—Kohli, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

of which occurred against his wishes. It is true that he did not punish the guilty parties; but it is equally true that he was not in a position to do so because of the restraint in which he was kept by the soldiery; nor does the fact that he did not punish the perpetrators of the outrage prove that he abetted their acts.²⁶

When the tidings of the imminent danger which menaced Agnew and Anderson reached Currie, he lost no time in ordering "all the disposable troops in any way available of the Sikh army to move upon Multan,"²⁷ and writing to General Whish to order the immediate march of the British movable column from Lahore to Multan in support of the Darbar troops.²⁸ He reported these proceedings to Lord Gough, who thoroughly approved of his action.²⁹ When, however, the news that the officers had been killed reached Lahore, Currie countermanded his orders,³⁰ and wrote to Lord Dalhousie: "I could not consent, under any circumstances, to send a British force on such an expedition whatever may be the result and consequence of the state of things which will follow, to the continuance of the Sikh Government. The principal Sardars started this morning, under the impression that the British column would follow. I have sent for them back, to explain to them that they must, by their own resources, put down the

²⁶ Says Edwardes: "It is only fair, however, to mention that one of Mul Raj's chief officers, whose trial succeeded that of his master assured me that the Diwan recognised Amir Chand (the soldier, who struck Agnew with his spear) as a soldier under the command of Bhagwan Das, and hurriedly told the latter officer, who rode behind him, to bring Amir Chand before him at the Am-Khas. This, however, never appeared in the trial, when heaven and earth, and even Mul Raj's features were ransacked for evidence of his innocence."—*op. cit.*, ii, (foot-note on) p. 61.

²⁷ Currie to Dalhousie, April 24, 1848; L. 137/Bk. 178, P. G. R.

²⁸ Currie to Whish, April 24, 1848; No. 312/W. E. 29. 4. 1848, P. G. R.

²⁹ Gough to Currie, April 27, 1848; L. 25/Bk. 191, P. G. R.

³⁰ Currie to Whish, April 26, 1848; No. 323/W. E. 29. 4. 1848, P. G. R.

rebellion of their own Governor, aided by their own troops and their officers, and bring the perpetrators to punishment.³¹ And this notwithstanding the fact that a British force was in the Punjab under treaty, and was paid out of the revenues of that kingdom for the very purpose of assuring "the continuance of the Sikh Government," or (as a clause of the treaty ran) for "preservation of the peace of the country!" The Resident continues in the same strain in his next letter written two days later: "The Chiefs returned yesterday morning, and having heard what I had to say regarding the necessity of their putting down the rebellion, and bringing the offenders to justice, by their own means *as the only hope of saving their Government*, they retired to consult and concert measures. After much discussion they declared themselves unable, without British aid, to coerce Diwan Mul Raj in Multan, and bring the perpetrators of the outrage to justice. . . . After what has happened I feel that if the question were one merely affecting the maintenance of the Sikh Government and preserving the tranquillity of their provinces we should scarcely be justified in expending more British blood and British treasure in such service."³² So soon was the threatening sound of annexation rung in the ears of the Sikh Sardars!

But though the British Resident was both unscrupulous and frank enough to express his unwillingness "to expend British blood" in a service which the British Government was treaty-bound to perform and for which they pocketed 22 lakhs of rupees a year out of the Punjab revenues, yet as the question was one "*which very deeply concerns British interests apart from the considerations connected with our Treaty with the Maharaja's Government at Bhyrowal*," he considered it absolutely necessary that the British Government should avenge the murder of its officers.³³ For this purpose then, if

³¹ Currie to Dalhousie, April 25, 1848; L. 138/Bk. 178, P. G. R.

³² Currie to Dalhousie, April 27, 1848; L. 139/Bk. 178, P. G. R.

³³ Ibid.

for no other, the Resident recommended to the Commander-in-Chief that from the political point of view it was of the utmost importance that a British force should move upon Multan to put down the rebellion "with as little delay as possible."³¹ This was a very sound opinion, and there is no doubt that if the Multan outbreak had been suppressed without delay, the insurrection would not have grown so formidable as it subsequently did; "it was a belief shared, moreover, (as well as I remember) by every political officer in the Punjab, and I for ~~one~~ still think so now."³⁵ But this was not what the Government of India wanted: they wanted to delay measures, so that the rebellion should spread far enough to provide the Government with a *fair* excuse for annexing the Punjab, or, to use a metaphor, "the Government of India had decided to let the Punjab abscess come to a head, and when ripe to lance it freely in the coming cold weather."³⁶

In reply, therefore, to Currie's letter advising speedy measures, Lord Gough wrote that as he considered it inexpedient to enter on operations against Multan at that season of the year, he had decided to defer them until the rains should be well over, and the cold season close at hand³⁷—a conclusion which "owed none of its cogency to the premises advanced."³⁸ Currie wrote back to Gough saying that he felt that the British Government ran a fearful risk by postponing operations until after the rains, and trusted that the Commander-in-Chief would bear in mind the necessity for an advance on Multan at the earliest possible moment.³⁹ Herbert Edwardes was more outspoken in this respect: "Some of the hardest campaigns in Indian history," he wrote to Currie, "were fought in

³⁴ Currie to Gough, April 27, 1848; L. 317/Bk. 195, P. G. R.

³⁵ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 174.

³⁶ Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War* (London, 1904), p. 101. *cf.* Trotter, *The History of the British Empire in India* (London, 1866), i, p. 134.

³⁷ Gough to Currie, April 28, 1848; L. 30/Bk. 190, P. G. R.

³⁸ Arnold, *op. cit.*, i, p. 77.

³⁹ Currie to Gough, May, 4, 1848; L. 319/Bk. 195, P. G. R.

the hot weather, and men do not sicken when their minds are on the stretch. . . . There is an argument still stronger for our settling this affair ourselves. Our national faith as pledged in the treaty solemnly demands that we should do all in our power to preserve little Dalip's throne. Now if we wished to appropriate the country, and upset that throne, we have only to concentrate a Sikh army on Multan; and disloyalty would follow union, national insurrection would follow disloyalty, and the seizure of the Punjab in self-defence follow insurrection, as inevitably as the links of a chain. The world would acquit us, being ignorant of what we know; but neither God nor our conscience could do so."⁴⁰

But considerations of acquittal in the eyes of God or a clear conscience could not have any weight with Lord Dalhousie, whose continuous policy, during the eight years he held his high office, was, in his own words, to seize all "rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves." He was even not unwilling to create such a "rightful" opportunity; and so he seized upon this opportunity of allowing the local outbreak at Multan to develop into a sort of a national Sikh rising, which would give him a justification to annex the Punjab in accordance with his settled policy. That these were his real intentions, will be clear from his private letter to Sir George Couper, his best friend, written as early as May 10, 1848. "Five months must elapse," he wrote, "before we can get at the Diwan. He will, of course, be busy all the time; he will gather an army of deperadoes. According to the Resident's anticipation, it is more than likely that the whole Sikh army will follow the example. At best, for half a year that unreasoning Eastern population must see us inactive, either unable or unwilling to move, according to the representations that will be made by the rebels; and operations on a large scale will, and must to all appearance follow." He says further that he approved of the Commander-in-Chief's decision "with all the danger, in very full view, of a re-

⁴⁰ Edwardes to Currie, May 4, 1848; L. 44/Bk. 191, P. G. R.

bellion unpunished for five months; recognizing the possibility that the rebellion will spread; contemplating the prospect of a fresh war in the Punjab—a costly campaign—, and the embarrassing question of what to do with the country when we had conquered it, as conquer we should.” And again, “the Government of Lahore declares itself unable either to punish the perpetrators of the crime, or to subdue to obedience their own rebellious subject who is the criminal. For all this, the State of Lahore owes us a heavy reparation, and by my word they should make that reparation somehow.”⁴¹

In a dozen different shapes in his later letters, Lord Dalhousie blurted out with brutal avowal what he intended to do with the country after he had conquered it, and making no secret of the “heavy reparation” which he wanted the State of Lahore to make. “If not in my day,” he wrote on August 4, 1848, “assuredly in my successor’s the curtain will fall on the Sikh dynasty. If it be not sponged out now, there will be no real tranquillity or sense of peace secured. *The right to annex the Punjab is beyond cavil.* The policy of it on the score of expense is not free from doubt.”⁴² On the 18th September, he made a more definite admission: “I can see no escape from the necessity of annexing this infernal country . . . I shall avoid annexation to the last moment; but I do not anticipate that it can be avoided.”⁴³ In a letter to Henry Lawrence, dated October 15, 1848, he expressed with his characteristic ruthlessness his determination to put an end to Sikh independence: “The task before me is the utter destruction and prostration of the Sikh power, the subversion of its dynasty, and the subjection of its people. This must be done promptly, fully, and finally.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Baird Ed., *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (Edinburgh, 1911), pp. 25-27. The letters in this volume were all of them written to Sir George Couper, who was Dalhousie’s most favoured correspondent.

⁴² *Idem*, p. 30.

⁴³ *Idem*, p. 33.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Morison, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

While discussions were thus going on in the British camp, events were following each other in rapid succession elsewhere. The story of Edwardes' amazing Multan adventure, how at the head of a ragged and motley band of levies, without sufficient treasure and with little serious military equipment, he won two pitched battles in June and July, and forced Mul Raj to retire within the walls of Multan, is one of the romances of history. Agnew's pencilled appeal for help reached Edwardes on the 22nd April in his camp at Dera Fateh Khan, on the banks of the Indus. He hastily collected what troops he could,⁴⁵ appealed for help to Bahawal Khan (the Chief of Bahawalpur), and marched to the rescue of his distressed countrymen. On the night of the 24th April, he crossed the Indus with his force, and encamped at Leiah.⁴⁶ There he came to know of the fate of Agnew and Anderson, and heard that Mul Raj intended marching against him. There also fell into his hands a document, being a summons from the Sikh soldiers in the Multan fort to the regiment of Sikhs—Fateh Paltan—under him;⁴⁷ and he decided that, at all hazards, a meeting between his own Sikh regiment and Mul Raj's soldiers must be prevented. Accordingly, he recrossed the river on the 2nd May, and awaited, at Dera Fateh Khan, the arrival of General Cortlandt, who was in charge of Dera Ismail Khan, and to whom Edwardes had addressed soon after the Multan outbreak. On the 4th May he was joined by Cortlandt, with a Muhammadan regiment and six guns,⁴⁸ whereupon Mul Raj,

⁴⁵ His force was not quite adequate. It consisted of 2 guns, 20 zamburas, 12 infantry companies and some 350 sowars. He was, thus, to quote his own words, "very much like a Scotch terrier barking at a tiger."—Edwardes to Currie, April 22, 1848; No. 342/W. E. 29. 4. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴⁶ Edwardes to Currie, April 25, 1848; L. 23/Bk. 191, P. G. R.

⁴⁷ Encl. in Edwardes to Currie, April 27, 1848; L. 27/Bk. 191, P. G. R.

⁴⁸ Edwardes to Currie, May 3-4, 1848; No. 403½/W. E. 13. 5. 1848, P. G. R.

who had followed Edwardes as far as Leiah, twenty miles from Dera Fateh Khan, retreated. On the next day Edwardes wrote to the Resident requesting him that in case operations were to be postponed until the cold weather, the latter should ask Bahawal Khan to send a strong force to assist him.⁴⁹

At this point Edwardes' independent operations were interrupted by "a general plan which Sir Frederick Currie finally adopted to fill up as advantageously as possible the interval of inaction which must ensue between May and October."⁵⁰ Aware that few Sikh troops could be trusted to act against Mul Raj, Currie decided to employ only the most trustworthy of them. According to his scheme, five columns were to operate for the pacification of the Multan province, three of them consisting of Sikh soldiers under Sikh Sardars, of whom Sher Singh was the most prominent,⁵¹ one of the army of Nawab of Bahawalpur, and the fifth of the troops collected by Edwardes.⁵² A considerable force was collected by the Sikh Sardars in accordance with this plan which the Resident had pressed them to adopt, but hardly had this force marched two-thirds of the way to Multan, when it was halted by the Resident's orders, as he feared that "the whole Sikh army is faithless to the Maharaja."⁵³ The Bahawalpur troops did not dare to march without the assistance of the Darbar force, and so the whole scheme of blockade fell through. This encouraged Mul Raj, and leaving a small garrison in Multan, he crossed the Chenab with 6,000 men and 15 guns, and advanced towards the Indus,

⁴⁹ Throughout this period Edwardes himself was also raising levies and collecting a force in the neighbouring territory for the impending struggle.

⁵⁰ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 205.

⁵¹ The other two Chiefs were Diwan Jawahar Mal Dutt and Shaikh Imam-ud-din.

⁵² Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 205.

⁵³ Currie to Edwardes, June 13, 1848; No. 712/W. E. 17. 6. 1848, P. G. R.

intent upon the destruction of Cortlandt's force, which had then again been separated from that of Edwardes, before a junction between their forces could be effected. Edwardes marched in haste to join him. But even their united troops numbered about half those of Mul Raj, and so he reiterated his appeal to the Resident, requesting that the Bahawalpur troops should be immediately asked to join them. In the meantime he himself advanced southwards, joining Cortlandt, on the 19th of May, at a point on the right bank of the Indus, opposite Dera Deen Punnah.⁵⁴

Two days after Edwardes had effected a junction with Cortlandt, he received an unexpected good news from the south. Ghulam Haidar Khan, the son of a Khosa Chief had succeeded in bringing about the surrender of the fortress of Dera Ghazi Khan. "It is wise," wrote Edwardes reporting the happy tidings to Currie, "to 'take fortune at the flood.' Our *ikbal* in this quarter is on the rise; our men confident; the enemy dreadfully depressed. This new victory at Ghazi Khan will either make Mul Raj withdraw to Multan, or rouse him to serious measures. In the latter case a decisive battle will be fought on the Indus."⁵⁵ He then again repeated his request to let him have the assistance of the Bahawalpur troops. As a matter of fact, Currie had already written to Bahawal Khan to cross the Sutlej in the Bari Doab and to march on Multan, though Edwardes was unaware of this. The Daoodputras, as the Bahawalpur troops were called, were on their way to Multan, when on the 18th June, a Multan force under Ram Rang gave them battle at Kineyri on the Chenab river, nearly twenty miles from Multan. The Multan army was defeated by the Bahawalpur troops, which were strengthened early in the morning of the same day "by about five thousand of my (i. e., Edwardes') men, ten of our guns,

⁵⁴ Edwardes to Currie, May 20-21, 1848; No. 559/W. E. 3. 6. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵⁵ Edwardes to Currie, May 21, 1848; No. 566/W. E. 3. 6. 1848, P. G. R.

and twenty-five zamburas, after a pitched battle, which lasted for nine hours, commencing a little after seven o'clock A. M., and not being decided till half-past four P. M."⁵⁶ Flushed with victory Edwardes began to advance upon Multan; on the way he was further strengthened by Shaikh Imam-uddin's force, 4,000 strong, on the 28th June, on which day also arrived Lieutenant Lake,⁵⁷ who had been appointed to the political charge of the Daoodputras, but who was virtually their Commander-in-Chief. Mul Raj made preparations to oppose Edwardes; and on July 1, 1848, was fought the battle of Suddosam,⁵⁸ which also resulted in the defeat of Mul Raj, who was now forced within the walls of Multan.

⁵⁶ Edwardes to Currie, June 18, 1848; No. 775/W. E. 24. 6. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵⁷ Edwardes to Currie, June 30, 1848; No. 961/W. E. 15. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵⁸ For details of the battle of Suddosam, see Nos. 927-931/W. E. 15. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPREAD OF THE OUTBREAK

First Siege of Multan—Defection of Sher Singh and the Consequent Raising of the Siege—Banishment of Maharani Jindan—Outbreak at Hazara—Spread of the Insurrection.

Soon after the battle of Kineyri, Edwardes, young and elated with victory, conceived the idea of besieging and taking Multan itself, and thus giving a *coup de grace* to the rebellion. Consequently he applied to Currie for some heavy guns and mortars, and for permission to begin the siege forthwith. "I would suggest," he wrote to Currie on June 22, 1848, "that the siege be commenced at once. We are enough of us in all conscience,¹ and desire nothing better than to be honoured with the commission you designed for a British army. All we require are a few heavy guns, a mortar battery, as many sappers and miners as you can spare, and Major Napier to plan our operations."² On receipt of this letter, Currie consulted Major Napier, of the Engineers, on the feasibility of operations against Multan at that season. Napier gave his opinion that operations were perfectly practicable, and could be undertaken "with every prospect of success" with the help of a single brigade, ten guns, and twenty mortars and howitzers from the British Army.³ This professional opinion was forwarded by Currie

¹ Edwardes had with him at that time a united force of 18,000 men with 30 guns.—Rait, *Life of Lord Gough* (Westminster, 1903), ii, p. 140.

² Edwardes to Currie, June 22, 1843; No. 823/W. E. 1. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

³ Memo. by Major R. Napier, June 28, 1848; No. 840/W. E. 1. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

to Gough on the 28th June, with the request that, if the Commander-in-Chief concurred with Napier, orders might be issued to the officers concerned to undertake the operations.⁴ On July 1, 1848, Currie received Gough's reply saying that he saw nothing in "the altered position of affairs which would justify me in taking upon myself the siege of Multan at the present moment;" nor did he consider the force proposed by Napier quite adequate.⁵ On the same day Gough repeated the same sentiments to the Governor-General, adding that if the Government should decide on immediate operations, the smallest force he could recommend would be two brigades of infantry (with a European regiment attached to each), one native cavalry brigade, with two troops of horse artillery, and a siege-train with foot-artillery.⁶

Currie had communicated Edwardes' prayer for reinforcements to Lord Dalhousie as well; and while he was waiting for his decision, the news reached him (on the 10th July) of Edwardes' victory at Suddosam. Taking the bit between his teeth, Currie now decided to use the special powers allowed him for acting in emergency, and ordered a British force, drawn partly from Lahore and partly from Ferozepore, to move upon Multan with a siege-train duly equipped, under General Whish,⁷ at the same time asking Sher

⁴ Currie to Gough, June 28, 1848; No. 841/W. E. 1. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵ Gough to Currie, July 1, 1848; No. 904/W. E. 8. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

⁶ Encl. in Gough to Currie, July 21, 1848; Nos. 1130-1132/W. E. 29. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

Sir John Littler, in his minute of July 21, 1848, entirely concurred with Lord Gough.—Encl. 26 in No. 32, Parliamentary Papers (1847-1849).

⁷ Currie to Whish, July 10, 1848; No. 926/W. E. 15. 7. 1848, P. G. R. Currie had decided to place under the command of Whish "a siege-train with its establishment, and a competent escort and force." But Gough referred him (*vide* No. 1049/W.E. 22. 7. 1848,

Singh to continue his advance and co-operate with Whish.⁸ On the same day he reported to the Government of India the reasons which had induced him to take the above step on his own responsibility.⁹ Thus forced, the Government, while recording their adherence to their former determination and washing their hands of the consequences, refrained from interfering with the Resident's action, as they were anxious to maintain his authority, and as any appearance of vacillation at that critical period would have had an injurious effect.¹⁰ On the 22nd July the Resident issued a proclamation to the people of Multan, informing them of the advance of a British force;¹¹ and the two columns left Ferozepore and Lahore on the 24th and 26th July respectively, reaching Multan on the 18th and 19th August. The disembarkation of the siege-train was not effected till the 4th September; and on that day, Whish issued a proclamation calling on the inhabitants and garrison of Multan to surrender unconditionally, but was answered by defiance.¹²

On the 6th September, Whish convened a council in his tent "to arrange finally a plan of attack on the fort and city of Multan." Two proposals—firstly, to take the city

P. G. R.) to the letter in which he had stated what he considered a sufficient force (see the previous foot-note). The result of this was that the force suggested by Currie was increased in accordance with Gough's recommendation.

⁸ *cf. supra*, p. 93.

⁹ Currie to Elliot, July 10, 1848; No. 935/W. E. 15. 7. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁰ Elliot to Currie, July 22, 1848; No. 1149/W. E. 5. 8. 1848, P. G. R. In a private letter dated the 4th August, 1848, Lord Dalhousie said: "For me to have countermanded them (i.e., the troops) when once ordered to move, would have been, in the eyes of all India, fear, and would have set the whole Frontier and Sindh in a blaze." Baird Ed., *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (Edinburgh, 1911), p. 29.

¹¹ Proclamation to the people of Multan, July 22, 1848; No. 1108/W.E. 29.7.1848, P. G. R.

¹² Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier* (London, 1851), ii, pp. 568-569.

by a *coup de main*, and secondly, to march round to the north and attack the citadel by regular approaches—were put forward by Major Napier, but both of them were negatived; while the third (submitted by Lieutenant Lake), to run a trench from the battery on the extreme right of the Daudputra camp north-east for a mile to a point called Ram Tirath, was adopted.¹³ Trench works were commenced accordingly on the 7th September. Two days later, an unsuccessful assault was made on the fortress. On the 12th, the British gained a small success, which advanced the British position by half a mile.¹⁴ Two days later, an event took place which marked the turning-point in the history of the rebellion. On that day Sher Singh went over bag and baggage to Mul Raj, taking with him all the troops under his command. A Council of War, held by General Whish, arrived at the conclusion that the siege was impracticable. Accordingly on the 15th September, the siege was raised, and the British troops took up an entrenched position.¹⁵

The defection of Sher Singh was the result of a series of high-handed and extremely unpopular acts of British representatives in the Punjab during the long interval between the first outbreak at Multan and the siege of the citadel, which frightened, irritated and provoked a large number of Sikh Sardars and soldiers, who saw in the executions, exiles and ill-treatment accorded to the highest dignitaries of the State, an intention to put an end to Sikh independence. The first of these incidents was the exile of the Maharani from the Punjab and her virtual imprisonment at Benares. There is no doubt that she was opposed to the British

¹³ Edwardes to Currie, September 7, 1848; No. 1500/W. E. 16. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁴ Vide Siddons' "Siege of Multan," quoted in Edwardes, op. cit., ii, p. 584.

¹⁵ Whish to Currie, September 14, 1848; No. 1543/W. E. 23. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

Edwardes to Currie, September 14, 1848; No. 1544/W. E. 23. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

ascendancy in the Punjab, and would have done anything in her power to rid the Punjab of the British: but in her forced retirement at Sheikhpura¹⁶ she was unable to do any harm to them. "There was no longer a man found in the Punjab who would shoulder a musket at her bidding," wrote one who had the best means of knowing the disposition of the people at the time, but "her memory survived, for she was not a woman to be forgotten,"¹⁷ and the Resident, by his unjudicial and injudicious act, revived that memory by impressing upon it the mark of martyrdom in the national cause.

The facts of the case are briefly as follows. On May 9, 1848, the Resident reported to the Government of "the detection of a conspiracy to corrupt the fidelity of our native soldiers of the infantry, artillery, and irregular cavalry, and the seizure of the offenders."¹⁸ Two days later three of the four delinquents were executed, while the fourth "was sentenced to imprisonment for life, with transportation beyond seas."¹⁹ On the 16th, the Resident reported that as "the late investigations of conspiracies for tampering with our sepoy, and making revolt and insurrection, deeply implicate the Maharani," she had been, in accordance with the Governor-General's directions to the Resident (*vide* the former's letter of August 27, 1847), "removed from the fort of Sheikhpura, *by my orders*, yesterday afternoon, and is now on her way" to Benares, where she would be put "under the surveillance of the Governor-General's Agent, subject to such custody as will prevent all intrigue and correspondence for the future," which "*seems to me the best course which we could adopt.*"²⁰

¹⁶ See *supra*, pp. 75-77.

¹⁷ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 497.

¹⁸ Currie to Elliot, May 9, 1848; No. 398/W. E. 13. 5. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁹ Currie to Elliot, May 11, 1848; No. 405/W. E. 13. 5. 1848 (or, L. 145/Bk. 178 II), P. G. R.

Umdat-ut-Twarikh, v, p. 100.

²⁰ Currie to Elliot, May 16, 1848; No. 440/W. E. 20. 5. 1848, P. G. R.

Currie knew that in August, 1847, the Sikh Chiefs had expressed their decided aversion "to incur what they considered the odium of participating in effecting the banishment of the Maharani,"²¹ and so he took this high-handed step of banishing her on *his own judgment and authority*. That he was aware of the serious consequences which would necessarily follow his act, is known by his statement that "a formal trial of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's widow would be most unpopular, and hurtful to the feelings of the people." But what really deterred him from putting the Maharani on her defence, as she demanded again and again in her letters to the British authorities, was his guilty conscience. "*Legal proof of the delinquency of the Maharani*," he avowed in the same despatch, "*would not, perhaps, be obtainable*." That the 'delinquency' of the Maharani was merely a flimsy excuse devised by the Resident for his iniquitous act, and that he was incapable of proving it if it were properly investigated, is evident from the fact that when later, by his own order, "all her property and papers" were seized, nothing objectionable was discovered among them.²² But the British authorities were not content with her banishment alone, and Currie was required by the Government to consider the 'propriety' of a reduction in her allowance, as "she has been guilty of plotting against the British interests at Lahore, and for this offence, the mere removal of her to British territory, cannot be called a punishment."²³ Consequently her allowance—which had already been reduced in August, 1847, to Rs. 48,000 per annum, the treaty notwithstanding²⁴—was further reduced, after her deportation to Benares, to Rs. 12,000 a

²¹ Henry Lawrence to Elliot, August 20, 1847; L. 118/Bk. 175, P. G. R.

²² Major Macgregor to Elliot, August 2, 1848; Encl. 1 in No. 34, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

²³ Elliot to Currie, May 27, 1848; Encl. 37 in No. 27, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

²⁴ By the treaty of Bhyrowal, December, 1846, she was to receive an annuity of Rs. 150,000.—see *supra*, pp. 70 and 76.

year. Besides, she was also stripped of "several *pataras*, containing jewels of great value."²⁵

The banishment of the Maharani was a measure as unjust as it was unjudicial; and whether it was the deliberate intention of the British Government or not,²⁶ it did result in instantaneously exasperating a large portion of the Khalsa army, and most of the leading Chiefs both in the Punjab and outside. "The reports from Raja Sher Singh's camp are," reported Currie to the Government about a week after the Rani's deportation, "that the Khalsa soldiery, on hearing of the removal of the Maharani, were much disturbed: they said, that she was the mother of all the Khalsa, *and that as she was gone, and the young Dalip Singh in our hands, they had no longer any one to fight for, and uphold; that they had no inducement to oppose Mul Raj, and if he came to attack them, would seize the Sardars, and their officers, and go over to him.*"²⁷ "There can be no doubt," wrote Amir Dost Mohammad to Captain Abbott, "that the Sikhs are daily becoming more and more discontented. Some have been dismissed from service, while others have been banished to

²⁵ Major Macgregor to Elliot, August 2, 1848; Encl. 1 in No. 44, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

²⁶ On the 19th May, Elliot wrote to Currie that as "it can hardly be doubted that the Rani is prepared for, if not already busy in mischief . . . , the Governor-General-in-Council requests that you will take steps for obtaining the consent of the Darbar to her immediate removal into the British territories with a view to her temporary safe custody there. *In the event of the Darbar showing any reluctance to do this, you are authorized to take your own measures and (unless reasons very urgent indeed lead you to a different conclusion) to remove the Rani accordingly without waiting for the consent of the Darbar.*"—Elliot to Currie, May 19, 1848; No. 567/W. E. 3. 6. 1848, P. G. R.

Currie, of course, needed no instructions; and he had already taken this step on his own authority three days earlier.

²⁷ Currie to Elliot, May 25, 1848; No. 515/W. E. 27. 5. 1848, P. G. R.

Hindustan, in particular the mother of Maharaja Dalip Singh, who has been imprisoned and ill-treated. Such treatment is considered objectionable by all creeds, and both high and low prefer death.”²⁸ This national grievance which became the cause of universal discontent, was given a prominent place in the manifesto which Sher Singh issued soon after he went over to Mul Raj. “It is well known,” ran the manifesto, “to all the inhabitants of the Punjab, to the whole of the Sikhs (and those who have been cherished by the Khalsa ji), and in fact to the world at large, with what oppression, tyranny and undue violence, the *Feringhis* have treated the widow of the great Maharaja Ranjit Singh—now in bliss, and what cruelty they have shown towards the people of the country. They have broken the treaty by imprisoning and sending away to Hindostan the Maharani, the mother of the people.”²⁹ The Rani’s deportation was thus considered by everybody attached to the kingdom founded by Ranjit Singh, as a national insult and as an act preliminary to the subversion of his dynasty and dominion.

The feeling of indignation thus aroused was further intensified by other imperious acts of the British officers. The province of Hazara had been included in the territories transferred to Gulab Singh, but it was subsequently exchanged for other territories near Jammu and handed over to the Lahore Darbar.³⁰ This was placed under the charge of Sardar Chatar Singh Atariwala (the father of Raja Sher Singh), who was to be “aided and advised” by Captain James Abbott, one of the Resident’s Assistants. But Abbott soon became at daggers drawn with Chatar Singh, and began to treat him in a supercilious manner. This, coupled with the news of the Maharani’s exile, led Chatar Singh to suspect that the

²⁸ Amir Dost Mohammad to Captain Abbott; Encl. 13 in No. 44, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

²⁹ Encl. in Edwardes to Currie, September 16, 1848; No. 1591/W. E. 23. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

³⁰ See *supra*, foot-note 7, p. 47.

British had decided upon his ruin as also that of the house of Ranjit Singh. His daughter was affianced to Maharaja Dalip Singh, and to test the true intentions of the British, he wrote to his son, Raja Sher Singh, to ask the Resident, through Herbert Edwardes, to fix a date for the marriage ceremony. Edwardes supported the application in a letter to Currie in which, after reporting the tenor of a conversation with Sher Singh on the subject, he added that "there can be no question that an opinion has gone very prevalently abroad, and been carefully disseminated by the evil disposed, that the British meditate declaring the Punjab forfeited by the recent troubles and misconduct of the troops and, whether the Atariwala family have any doubts, or not, upon this point themselves, it would, I think, be a wise and timely measure to give such public assurance of British good faith, and intention to adhere to the Treaty, as would be involved in authoritative preparation for providing the young Maharaja with a Queen. It would, no doubt, settle men's minds greatly."⁸¹ The reply of the Resident was so evasive that it increased rather than allayed suspicion. "Of course," he observed, "with reference to the position of the Maharaja nothing can be done in this case, without the concurrence and approbation of the Resident." He then promised to "consult, confidentially, the members of the Darbar now at Lahore, on the subject of the time at which the marriage should be celebrated," professed the desire of the British Government "to promote the honour and happiness of the Maharaja, and of the bride and her family," but added the ominous words: "I do not see how the proceeding with the ceremonies for the Maharaja's nuptials can be considered as indicative of any line of policy which the Government may consider it right to pursue now, or at any future time, in respect to the administration of the Punjab."⁸² To Raja

⁸¹Edwardes to Currie, July 28, 1848; No. 1173/W. E. 5. 8 1848, P. G. R.

⁸²Currie to Edwardes, August 3, 1848; No. 1174/W. E. 5. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

Sher Singh and his father this reply must have been yet another indication of the way the wind was blowing in the British camp.

The baneful effects of this ingenious reply to an ingenuous request were further increased by the supercilious attitude adopted by Captain Abbott towards Sardar Chatar Singh. Shortly after the outbreak at Multan, Abbott was infatuated with the belief that the Sardar was "at the head of a conspiracy for the expulsion of the English from the Punjab, and was about to head a crusade against the British forces at Lahoré."³³ He moved to a residence thirty-five miles away from that of Chatar Singh,³⁴ and was "thus shut out from all personal communication with him."³⁵ "The constant suspicion," reported the Resident to the Government, "with which Captain Abbott regarded Sardar Chatar Singh, seems to have, not unnaturally, estranged that Chief from him. . . . Captain Abbott looks upon Chatar Singh as a sort of incarnation of treason; and the Sardar has been led to believe that Captain Abbott is bent on the annihilation of himself and the Khalsa army on the first opportunity."³⁶ The suspected Chief, in the Resident's own words was "an old and infirm man, the father-in-law of the Maharaja, with more at stake than any man almost in the Punjab," and that he "should have taken the leading part in an affair of the kind described by Captain Abbott, is altogether incredible."³⁷ In a subsequent letter to the Government, Currie complained of "a very ready disposition on the part of Captain Abbott to believe the reports that are brought

³³ Currie to Elliot, August 12, 1848; No. 1260/W. E. 12. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Currie to Elliot, August 15, 1848; No. 1274/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

³⁶ Currie to Elliot, August 12, 1848; No. 1260/W. E. 12. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

³⁷ Ibid.

to him of conspiracies, plots and treasons—a suspicion of everybody, far or near, even of his own servants, and a conviction of the infallibility of his conclusions, which is not shaken by finding, time after time, that they are not verified.”⁸⁸

This propensity of Abbott's soon brought matters to a crisis. A portion of the brigade of the Darbar troops stationed at Pukli, near the Sardar's residence, showed some signs of marching to Multan in order to join the insurrection, but they were very few in number, and were entirely unsupported by their officers, who (on Abbott's own testimony) “did not countenance the men in the move” and made an attempt at “putting down the mutiny.”⁸⁹ Abbott coldly construed it, on the authority of the intelligence which he received and in which he implicitly put his faith, as a formal participation in the Multan insurrection, of all the Darbar troops in Hazara headed by Chatar Singh. Early in August, 1848, therefore, on his own authority and without communicating his purpose to any one, he roused the armed Muhammadan peasantry, “*called upon them, by the memory of their murdered parents, friends and relatives, to rise and aid me in destroying the Sikh forces in detail,*”⁴⁰ and closed the passes which made any movement of the Darbar troops almost impossible. On the 6th, “the mountaineers (instigated by Abbott) assembled in great numbers, and surrounded the town of Haripur,” where Sardar Chatar Singh was putting up. In self-defence, the Sardar ordered the troops, stationed for the protection of the town, to encamp on the esplanade

⁸⁸ Currie to Elliot, August 15, 1848; No. 1274/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁸⁹ Abbott to Currie, August 17, 1848; No. 1353/W. E. 26. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

Abbott also stated that the Golandaz (artillerymen) and the Zamburchis (comel-gunners) were disinclined to the move—*Ibid.*—, thus admitting that the disaffection was by no means widespread or general.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

"under the protection of the guns from the fort."⁴¹ Colonel Canora, an American, who had been for some years in the Sikh service, refused to move his battery with the rest of the troops without Abbott's permission. Chatar Singh "repeated his orders, saying that Captain Abbott could not know the peril they were in from the threatened attack of the armed population, who could easily seize the guns where they were," but Canora did not pay any heed this time too. Two companies of infantry were then sent to enforce the Sardar's orders, but Canora loaded two of his guns with double charges of grape, and standing between them "with the lighted port-fire in his hand, said he would fire upon the first man that came near."⁴² On the refusal of one of his own havildars to fire upon the infantry, he cut him down, and applied the match himself. But the gun missed fire, and at that time Canora was shot down by the advancing files, though not before he had killed two Sikh officers with his pistol.

Even in this unavoidable and perfectly justifiable homicide, Abbot found an opportunity to vent his wrath against Sardar Chatar Singh, and sent to the Resident an utterly false account of the incident, shamelessly charging the Sardar with "a cold-blooded murder, as base and cowardly as his murder of Peshora Singh,"⁴³ and (later), with having *determined upon* the murder of Canora.⁴⁴ The Resident did not agree with Abbott as to the character he assigned to this transaction, as the Sardar was the Governor of the province and all the officers of the Sikh army were bound to obey his orders.⁴⁵ He further remarked: "It is clear that whatever

⁴¹ Currie to Elliott, August 12, 1848; No. 1260/W. E. 12. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴² Currie to Gough, August 15, 1848; No. 1270/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴³ Abbott to Currie, August 10, 1848; No. 1320/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴⁴ Abbott to Currie, August 17, 1848; No. 1353/W. E. 26. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴⁵ Currie to Abbott, August 19, 1848; No. 1323/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

may have been the intention of the Pukli Brigade, *no overt act of rebellion was committed by them till the initiative was taken by you*, by calling out the armed peasantry and surrounding the Brigade in its cantonment. I have given you no authority to raise levies, and organise paid bands of soldiers, *to meet an emergency, of the occurrence of which I have always been somewhat sceptical*. It is much, I think, to be lamented. . . . that you have judged of the purposes, and feelings and fidelity of the Nazim and the troops, from the reports of spies and informers, very probably interested in misrepresenting the real state of affairs. *None of the accounts that have yet been made justifies you in calling the death of Commedan Canora a murder, nor in asserting that it was premeditated by Sardar Chatar Singh.*"⁴⁶ How far the Resident was justified in charging his subordinate with taking the initiative, will be seen from the following extract from one of Abbott's letters to Currie: "I wrote to the Sardar", he reported on the 10th August, "insisting upon the instant surrender of the murderers of this loyal and gallant officer (i.e., Canora), and the return of the troops to their cantonments, *promising, upon these conditions, to settle all disturbances in the country.*"⁴⁷ "If the murderers of Colonel Conora," he wrote three days later, "are surrendered to me for judgment, and the troops sent back to their several cantonments, *I will, instantly, reduce the country to its former profound tranquillity.*"⁴⁸ What else do these statements of Abbott's connote, if not a betrayal of himself and a plain enough avowal that he was the originator of all the disturbances in Hazara?

But although the Resident was absolutely sure of the Sardar's innocence and firmly believed that "the initiative was taken by Captain Abbott," yet that initiative was not only

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Abbott to Currie, August 10, 1848; No. 1320/W. E. 19. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁴⁸ Abbott to Currie, August 13, 1848; Encl. 7 in No. 36, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

not publicly repudiated by him, but what is still worse, Chatar Singh was threatened with sequestration of his estate and title. On the 16th August, Captain Nicholson, who had been instructed by Currie to bring about a reconciliation between Chatar Singh and Abbott, in a letter to the Resident said that the letters written by Chatar Singh, which in Abbott's opinion were written for the purpose of "exciting the Sikh army to mutiny," were couched "in a tone of virtuous indignation, and were merely appeals for help, written under the stress of terror and anxiety;" also that Abbott's demand for the men who killed Canora would prove an insurmountable obstacle," and that Chatar Singh would "never accede to any terms but a free pardon." He then expressed his opinion that if the Resident agreed to grant a full pardon to the Sardar, there would be no difficulty whatever.⁴⁹ Four days later, however, he reported to the Resident the offer of the following terms to Chatar Singh: "that if the Sardar immediately come into me, and sent back the troops to their posts, I guarantee his life and *izzat* being spared; *but I neither guarantee his Nazimship nor his Jagir, which, indeed, I have intimated to him he cannot expect to be allowed to retain.*" "All things considered," he added, "I trust you will agree with me, that the loss of the Nazamat and of his Jagir will be a sufficient punishment, and that I have acted rightly in offering these terms."⁵⁰ The Resident, his former admissions of Chatar Singh's innocence notwithstanding, forthwith "*entirely approved, confirmed and ratified*" this severe punishment.⁵¹ The refusal of any redress to him, and the severe sentence passed on him without any trial, did not leave any doubt in Chatar Singh's mind that he was to be victim number one in the general subversion of Dalip

⁴⁹ Nicholson to Currie, August 16, 1848; Encl. 11 in No. 36, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁵⁰ Nicholson to Currie, August 20, 1848; No. 1344/W. E. 26. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵¹ Currie to Nicholson, August 23, 1848; No. 1435/W. E. 26. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

Singh's kingdom. Thus driven to desperation, he openly raised the standard of revolt, dedicating himself to one last struggle for the Sikh independence.

Meanwhile, Sher Singh was doing his best to preserve the loyalty of the troops under his command.⁵² In his despatches to the Resident, Edwardes repeatedly attested the sincerity of Sher Singh in leading "against Multan an army which would any day have joined the rebels had he wished them to do so, and so have saved Mul Raj from being defeated at Kineyri and Suddosam."⁵³ When Sher Singh received letters regarding the Hazara affair from his father, he showed them to Edwardes in the camp at Multan, and "discussed the matter with great good sense, and put it to me (i.e., Edwardes), whether all that his father had done to oppose the Moolkias (i. e., the armed Muhammadan peasantry) was not perfectly natural and excusable, on the supposition that he was innocent of the plots suspected by Captain Abbott. "No man," said he, "will allow himself to be killed without a struggle."⁵⁴ Early in September, however, he received letters from his father couched in terms of despair at the ill-treatment which the British representatives were meting out to him. In spite of these letters, which were bound to have a great influence on him, he remained steadfast in his resolve up till the failure of the besiegers' attack on the 9th September;⁵⁵ then for three days he wavered, but

⁵² In an interview with Edwardes on the 8th September, Shaikh Imam-ud-din stated to him as follows: "He (i.e., the Shaikh) said that I (i.e., Edwardes) must be fully aware that Raja Sher Singh's soldiers had long been in a disaffected state, but that *hitherto* the Sardars had stood; that the Raja had from the beginning been active in suppressing the bad *spirit*, and volunteering to do service for the State."—Edwardes to Currie, September 10, 1848; No. 1513/W. E. 16. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵³ Edwardes, op. cit., ii, p. 538.

⁵⁴ Edwardes to Currie, August 19, 1848; No. 1346/W. E. 26. 8. 1848, P. G. R.

⁵⁵ *Vide supra*, p. 99.

on the 13th, despite the successes of the previous day,⁵⁶ he finally resolved to make an effort, at all hazards, for the assistance of his injured father, and for the existence of the Sikh sovereignty, which he began to see was doomed. On the next day (September 14, 1848) he along with his troops went over to Diwan Mul Raj, as a result of which General Whish was, as has been seen,⁵⁷ forced to raise the siege.

For the moment, however, the raising of the siege seemed to be the only effect of Sher Singh's defection, for he received anything but a cordial reception from Diwan Mul Raj, who, indeed, regarded his movements with distrust and suspicion. The Diwan refused him admission into Multan, asking him to encamp in the Hazuri Bagh under the guns of the fort, while his suspicions were increased by a fictitious letter addressed to Sher Singh, which Edwardes devised should fall into Mul Raj's hands.⁵⁸ Sher Singh was soon disgusted with the suspicion with which he was regarded by the Diwan, and so on the 9th October he marched from Multan to join his father.⁵⁹ Sher Singh had, soon after he joined Mul Raj, issued a manifesto calling upon "all good Sikhs" to "expel the tyrannous and crafty *Feringhis*," under whom both their possessions "and their religions were threatened."⁶⁰ The response to this was both wide and instantaneous, and the old soldiers of the Khalsa flocked at many places to join Sher Singh. In the meantime, Chatar Singh had opened communications with Amir Dost Muhammad⁶¹ and the Sikh troops in Peshawar; and by the end of October the British officers at Peshawar (including George Lawrence) were oblig-

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ *Vide supra*, pp. 99-100.

⁵⁸ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 631-633.

⁵⁹ *Idem*, ii, p. 633.

⁶⁰ Encl. in Edwardes to Currie, September 16, 1848; No. 1591/W. E. 23. 9. 1848, P. G. R.

⁶¹ The main reason of drawing in Dost Muhammad was evidently to obtain Muhammadan support which Chatar Singh knew would not be readily given to the Sikhs; and for this purpose he promised to offer Peshawar to the Amir.

ed to evacuate Peshawar, withdrawing under an Afgan escort to Kohat, where an asylum was offered to them by Sultan Muhammad Khan. But early in November, Peshawar was taken by Chatar Singh, who forced Sultan Muhammad to hand them over to him. Shortly afterwards, Attock also fell into Chatar Singh's hands, and Lieutenant Herbert, who had taken Nicholson's place at Attock, was captured while attempting to escape, and was sent to join other British prisoners in Chatar Singh's hands at Peshawar. The Bannu troops too, as soon as they heard the news of Sher Singh's defection, rose in rebellion, killed Malik Fateh Khan Tiwana,⁶² and marched off to join Sher Singh.⁶³ The British authorities viewed with natural satisfaction these local disturbances on the north-west frontier as these at least afforded them the *casus belli* which they had been trying hard to bring about ever since the Multan outbreak. Consequently, though George Lawrence and Nicholson had been clamouring, throughout September and October for a British brigade to the north-west, absolutely nothing was done by the British authorities, whose plans were formed "on the theory that the movement was one which could not be nipped in the bud by local successes, and that consequently the army should not move until it could do so in sufficient force to meet the Sikh nation in arms."⁶⁴

⁶² Malik Fateh Khan had been sent as Governor to Bannu by Edwardes, on the recall of Lieutenant Taylor, the British Political Agent at Bannu, from that place.—Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 637-639.

⁶³ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 639-640.

⁶⁴ Gough and Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars* (London, 1897), p. 190.

CHAPTER VII

THE FINAL ACT

*A Campaign to Support "The Constituted Government"—
Second Siege of Multan and the Surrender of Mul Raj—
'Second Sikh War'—The Final Act—Conclusion.*

The opportunity which the Governor-General was looking for at long last now (in September, 1848) presented itself, and he found in the spread of disaffection in the Punjab the *casus belli* which he had been doing his best to bring about ever since the outbreak at Multan¹. No longer able to restrain himself from giving vent to his joy at his cherished dreams² coming true, he wrote thus in a private letter to Currie: "The rebellion of Raja Sher Singh followed by his army; the rebellion of Sirdar Chuttur Singh with the Durbar army under his command, the state of the troops and of the Sikh population everywhere, *have brought matters to that crisis I have for months been looking for; and we are now, not on the eve of but, in the midst of war with the Sikh nation and the Kingdom of the Punjab.*

"The result of this mad movement to the people and dynasty of the Sikhs can be no longer matter of discussion

¹ "If the delay in crushing the rebellion," writes Trotter, "sprang in part from a secret hope of its spreading far enough to furnish government with a fair excuse for annexing the whole dominions of Ranjit Singh, that excuse grew more and more feasible as week after week of the hot and rainy seasons slipped by."—Trotter, *History of the British Empire in India* (London, 1866), i, p. 134. See also Thorburn, *Punjab in Peace and War* (London, 1904), p. 101.

² See *supra* pp. 90-92.

or of doubt.”³

As soon, therefore, as the news of the defection of Sher Singh reached Lord Dalhousie, he ordered “an immediate augmentation of the army, by recruiting it up to the former establishment of 1,000 privates per regiment of infantry, and 500 sowars per each irregular cavalry regiment,”⁴ sanctioned the despatch of a strong division of the Bombay army up the Indus to Multan,⁵ and asked the authorities in England to send out without delay three European infantry regiments of the Queen’s army — a request which was forthwith complied with.⁶ On October 10, 1848, he left Calcutta for the theatre of war to “regulate our proceedings with reference to the Punjab.”⁷

Before leaving Calcutta, Dalhousie had, on the 3rd October, desired his Secretary to *secretly and confidentially* intimate to the Resident at Lahore, that *he considered “the State of Lahore to be, to all intents and purposes, directly at war with the British Government.”*⁸ The following private

³ Private Letter from Dalhousie to Currie, October 8, 1848; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

⁴ Elliot to the Adjutant-General of the Army, September 30, 1848; Encl. 48 in No. 38, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁵ Rait, *Life of Lord Gough* (Westminster, 1903), ii, p. 160; Fortescue, *History of the British Army* (London, 1927), xii, p. 429; Trotter, *British Empire in India*, op. cit., i, p. 137; Hunter, *The Marquis of Dalhousie* (Oxford, 1894), p. 76.

⁶ Lee-Warner, *The Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie* (London, 1904), i, p. 174.

⁷ Quoted in Thorburn, op. cit., p. 105.

⁸ Elliot to Currie, October 3, 1848; No. 1858/W. E. 28. 10. 1848, P. G. R.

He had also, on the 5th October, at a ball at Barrackpore made a speech, which would have put to shame even the greatest of all hypocrites. “I have wished for peace,” he said, “I have longed for it; I have striven for it. But unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and can my word, Sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance.”—Trotter, *The Marquis of Dalhousie*, op. cit., p. 38. These words are quoted in almost every book on the subject.

letters of Currie to the address of Dalhousie and Gough, as soon as he received this despatch, show clearly the absurdity of this declaration of war against "the State of Lahore" and the anomalous position in which it placed the Resident, who was the virtual ruler of "the State of Lahore,"⁹ carrying on the administration of the State in the name of the infant Maharaja by virtue of the treaty of Bhyrowal, and in unaltered accordance with the terms of that treaty.¹⁰

"I have to-day," Currie wrote to the Governor-General, on the 12th October, "received the letter of Government of 3rd instant, No.376, the last para of which has a good deal puzzled me, as to the line which your Lordship wish me to take at the present time.

"The letter says:—'The Govr.-General-in-Council considers the State of Lahore to be, to all intents and purposes, directly at war with the British Government.'

"Now if that be the case, I, with my assistants, am in an anomalous position, as superintending and aiding the administration of the Lahore State; and if I were to withdraw from the Government, and to declare the Treaty violated and all amicable relations between the two States at an end, we should have the whole country up at once as one man to destroy us if possible."

He suggested that no open declaration of war should be made till they were strong enough to do so. "This is the present state of things, and thus they should, I think, remain until the Government is prepared to declare that the conduct of the Lahore State has dissolved all existing engage-

⁹ See *supra*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰ On the same day, simultaneously with the intimation of this confidential declaration of war to the Resident, Elliot expressed the satisfaction of the Government of India, in another letter to the same officer, on hearing that the fortress of Govindgarh, which had till then been garrisoned by Sikh troops, had been made over to British troops "in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Bhyrowal."—Elliot to Currie, October 3, 1848; Encl. 49 in No. 38, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

ments by the violation of the Treaty on which they were based; and the course for the future Administration of the Punjab, which the Government has determined to pursue. *This declaration should not be made till the Commander-in-Chief is in a commanding attitude, at Lahore, and the sooner H. E. is here, with, at any rate, a portion of his army, the more easily will all the future operations of the Punjab be conducted. . . . I think that in the first instance nothing more explicit of the Government intentions need be proclaimed, and that this proclamation should not be made till we are in circumstances to follow it up. . . . I think we may quietly annex the Punjab districts to the British provinces, making a suitable provision for the State and comfort of Maharaja Dalip Singh, who may continue to occupy the Palace in the Fort of Lahore, the Fort being in our possession, in the manner decided in the papers lately sent to Your Lordship.*"¹¹ On the next day he voiced the same feelings in a confidential letter to the Commander-in-Chief:—

" At present, I and my assistants and the British Garrison, are here for the purpose of aiding by superintendence, advice and protection, the maintenance of the Lahore State and its administration. We cannot continue to protect and maintain a State which we declare to be at war with us; and *we are not in that commanding or strong position here which would enable us to take the steps such a declaration would render necessary. . . .*"¹²

Needless to say, this course of duplicity and chicanery suggested by Currie was adopted in its entirety by the British authorities, and no open declaration of war was made with a view to minimising opposition, and to retain the influence of the Darbar and the services of many of the Darbar troops. The nadir of this double-dealing was reached in the proclamation which Currie issued to the people of the Punjab on

¹¹ Private Letter from Currie to Dalhousie, October 12, 1848; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

¹² Private Letter from Currie to Gough, October 13, 1848; P. & R. I. POONA RECORDS.

November 18, 1848,¹³ and which was approved by the Governor-General on the 14th December.¹⁴ Explaining the circumstances under which the proclamation was issued, Currie wrote that as "misrepresentations of the purposes of the British Government (in advancing an army, under the Commander-in-Chief, on the Punjab), were being sedulously circulated by the disaffected" and as "the insurgents have sent throughout the provinces inflammatory papers . . . in which they declare that the object of the British Government is the wholesale extermination of the Sikhs indiscriminately, and the suppression of the Khalsa religion," he considered it necessary "to counteract their machinations at once, by a declaration to the people of the Punjab, of the real object of the present advance of the British army."¹⁵ The proclamation, after saying that "it is not the desire of the British Government that those who are innocent of the above offences (c. g., "exciting rebellion and insurrection"), who have taken no part, secretly or openly, in the disturbances, and who have remained faithful in their obedience to the Government of Maharaja Dalip Singh,—be they Sikh or be they of any other class,—should suffer with the guilty," informed the people of the Punjab that the army "*has entered the Lahore territories, not as an enemy to the constituted Government, but to restore order and obedience.*"¹⁶ On February 5, 1849, another proclamation was made by Sir Henry Lawrence,¹⁷ under orders from the Governor-General, confirming the previous one.¹⁸ But when the treaty of

¹³ No. 2135/W. E. 2. 12. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁴ Elliot to Currie, December 14, 1848; No. 2224/W. E. 23. 12. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁵ Currie to Elliot, December 2, 1848; No. 2134/W. E. 2. 12. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁶ No. 2135/W. E. 2. 12. 1848, P. G. R.

¹⁷ Henry Lawrence, who had left for England on sick leave in January 1848, had, in the meanwhile, returned to Lahore, and he took charge of the Residency on February 1, 1849, from Sir Frederick Currie, who was again appointed to the Supreme Council.

¹⁸ Encl. 13 in No. 48, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

guardianship had been turned to the fullest account, with the Maharaja's troops and resources, for the suppression of the rebellion, and the British authorities considered the time opportune, a proclamation, by which the Punjab was declared to be a portion of the British Empire in India, was issued under the signatures of the Secretary to the Government of India and "by order of the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India."¹⁹

To proceed with our narrative. It will be recalled that Sher Singh left the British camp and went over to Mul Raj on the 14th September.²⁰ His defection forthwith caused Whish and Edwardes to raise the siege of Multan and to entrench at some distance from the town, where they remained encamped till the end of December, awaiting reinforcements from Bombay. These arrived at last under the command of Brigadier Dundas on the 21st December,²¹ having been unnecessarily delayed for a month owing to "a ridiculous question of personnel etiquette."²² Whish's numbers were thus raised to about 15,000 men, with 97 guns (including 67 pieces of siege ordnance);²³ and on the 27th, the long-suspended siege of Multan was resumed.²⁴ After a

"A proclamation was issued," ran the proclamation of February 5, 1849, "by Sir Frederick Currie, on the 18th November last. I now, AGAIN, make known by order of the Governor-General, the terms on which alone pardon may still be obtained."

¹⁹ For the text of the proclamation, see Arnold, Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration (London, 1862), i, pp. 202-204.

²⁰ See *supra*, pp. 99-100, 111.

²¹ Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier* (London, 1851), ii, p. 678; Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 249. Trotter, *British Empire in India*, *op. cit.*, i, u. 160. Arnold (*op. cit.*, i, p. 153) gives the 26th December as the date of the arrival of the reinforcements; while according to Fortescue (*op. cit.*, xii, p. 444), they arrived on the 22nd December.

²² Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 247-249. See also Gough & Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars* (London, 1897), p. 201.

²³ Siddons' *Journal of the Siege of Multan*, quoted in Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 681.

²⁴ Henry Lawrence, who had in the meanwhile returned to

heavy bombardment and hard fighting for about a week, the city of Multan was carried by assault on January 2, 1849;²⁵ but Mul Raj succeeded in holding the fort with some 4,000 men. The fort was, therefore, invested, and the assault was prepared. But it was rendered unnecessary, as an unfortunate accident, which had befallen Mul Raj on December 30, 1848, finally forced him to surrender. A chance shell from the British batteries fell upon the Masjid in the citadel, which formed Mul Raj's principal magazine, "and descending into the combustibles below, blew the vast fabric into the air"²⁶. About 400,000 lbs. of powder and 500 of the garrison were reported to have perished in this explosion²⁷. The injury was irreparable, and Mul Raj made overtures to surrender both to Edwardes and Whish, both of whom steadily refused to grant him any terms²⁸. On January 22, 1849, he surrendered at discretion²⁹; the entire garrison laying down their arms and becoming prisoners of war. Instructions had been issued by Gough for the movements of the troops after their victory, and, in accordance with his arrangements, a small garrison remained behind to hold Multan, and the rest of the troops marched, without delay, up the Chenab to its

India made his way up from Bombay "in an incredibly short period", and reached Multan "just in time to see the opening of the second siege"—Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 689-690.

²⁵ Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 691-693.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 690.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 691.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 695-700.

²⁹ Whish to Currie, January 22, 1849; No. 165/W. E. 27. 1. 1849, P. G. R. Dunlop has described the scene of surrender thus: "At length Mul Raj appeared with his brothers, Sham Singh and Ram Singh, and several of his Sardars, riding on an Arab charger, covered with a rich scarlet saddle cloth. He was gorgeously attired in silks and splendid arms, he looked round without the smallest emotion and showed in his countenance neither definance nor dejection but moved along under the general gaze, like a man conscious of deserving the admiration of even his enemies for having done his duty to the last."—Dunlop, *Multan during and after the Siege* (London, 1849).

junction with the Jhelum, and from there to Ramnagar, where they assembled in time to take part in the decisive battle of Gujrat.³⁰

While Whish's force was still entrenched at some distance from Multan, awaiting reinforcements from Bombay, and more than two months before the surrender of Mul Raj, the grand army under the personal command of Lord Gough was moving rapidly into Ferozepore. On the 6th November, Gough reached there, and was met by the news of the fall of Peshawar, which increased his anxiety for an immediate forward movement, in order to make the Punjab the theatre of war and engage Sher Singh there before he could effect a junction with his father, Chatar Singh, in the more difficult country about Peshawar. At that time Sher Singh was lying with his army on the western bank of the Chenab, opposite Ramnagar, twenty-five miles short of Wazirabad. Gough hoped to allure Sher Singh's force across the Chenab, beat them, and through a rapid flank movement of his cavalry by way of Wazirabad, to cut them off from the revolted Bannu garrison and the troops of Chatar Singh. He sent an advanced force (mainly cavalry) under Cureton, who was joined on the 16th November by two more infantry regiments under Colin Campbell, who as senior officer took command of the whole, and took up a position about eight miles from Ramnagar. From there the cavalry was employed in daily reconnaissances, though avoiding any engagement. On the 13th Gough himself came to Lahore; three days later he crossed the Ravi, and began his advance with the main body. "*It was not till after leaving Lahore,*" writes his biographer, "*that he knew the definite decision of the Governor-General and that the war was to be against, and not in support of, the Darbar. 'I do not know', he said on the 15th 'whether we are at peace or war, or who it is we are fighting for.'*"³¹ He

³⁰ Rait, op. cit., ii, p. 250.

³¹ Rait, op. cit., ii, p. 178. See also Fortescue, op. cit., xii, p. 433.

joined the advanced force on the 21st November.⁸² The army was now complete, with the exception of the heavy artillery (which was being brought up as immediately as possible) and of Whish's force before Multan (the doings of which have already been recorded).⁸³

The main body of Sher Singh's troops⁸⁴ was now encamped on the right bank of the Chenab, opposite Ramnagar, but outposts remained on the other bank. Gough decided, as a preliminary operation, to drive those outposts across the river and to capture any guns that they may possess. But launching a cavalry charge across a sandy river-bed two miles wide and under heavy gunfire, he suffered a defeat at Ramnagar on the 22nd November. A minor action was fought on the 3rd December at Sadulapur, from which the Sikhs retired in unbroken order from the Chenab to the Jhelum; and the British troops were enabled to effect the passage of the Chenab. The irritated Governor-General enjoined Gough to caution; and for five weeks he remained inactive, having resolved to wait until he was reinforced by the troops before Multan.⁸⁵ But early in January 1849, Attock fell into the hands of Chatar Singh, and this made it essential for Gough to risk an immediate attack, before Chatar Singh's troops should have time to join Sher Singh's army. So he moved to Dinghi on the 12th January, within eight miles of the Sikh position, just beyond the village of Chilianwala.

⁸² For this paragraph see the following: Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 175-179; Gough & Innes, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-207; Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 189-190.

⁸³ The force really under Gough's command comprised a cavalry division under Cureton, two infantry divisions under Sir Walter Gilbert and Sir Joseph Thackwell, and the artillery under Brigadier Tennant.—Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 179-180.

⁸⁴ The Bannu troops had also joined Sher Singh on the 17th November.

⁸⁵ Fortescue, *op. cit.*, xii, pp. 434-443; Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 181-210; Gough & Innes, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-214; Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 189-200.

On the 13th January he attacked the Sikh army, entrenched in a magnificent position which afforded little opportunity for the British Cavalry to manœuvre. The battle of Chillianwala has been graphically described as "an evening battle fought by a brave old man in a passion."³⁶ His "Irish blood"—or, as Marshman calls it, his "spirit of defiance and antagonism"—being roused by a few shots from Sikh field-guns falling near him after an hour's artillery duel, at two in the afternoon he gave up his original resolve "not to attack that day, but to make reconaissance in force, and attack early on the morrow," and ordered "the whole army to advance in lines."³⁷ The dense patches of thorny bush which screened the Sikhs broke the ordered advance of British brigades, and the battle turned into a series of separate contests. The Sikhs opened fire on the British with deadly discharges of grape, and though the Sikhs were forced to retreat three miles, the British suffered very heavily. The loss at Chillianwala amounted to 2,338 in killed and wounded,³⁸ and this, together with the news that a British Brigade was repulsed with terrible loss and that four guns and the colours of three regiments had been taken, "evoked a hurricane of public censure against a commander who had thrown away precious lives so recklessly for no appreciable gain."³⁹ Hobhouse observed that "the impression made upon the public mind" by the news of Chillianwala was "stronger than that caused by the Kabul massacre. The result has been that in eight-and-forty hours after the arrival of the mail, it was determined to send Sir Charles Napier to command the

³⁶ Hunter, *The Marquis of Dalhousie* (Oxford, 1894), p. 77.

³⁷ Lord Dalhousie to the Duke of Wellington, January 22, 1849; quoted in Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, i, p. 206. Rait, the biographer of Lord Gough, has tried to show (*op. cit.*, ii, p. 219) that there was no sudden change of plan, and that "the similar myth that Lord Gough's 'Irish blood' was roused by a few shots falling near him is equally groundless;" but his defence is open to question.

³⁸ Rait, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 238.

³⁹ Trotter, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, (London, 1889), p. 42.

Indian army.”⁴⁰ To Napier the still more aged Duke of Wellington said, “If you do not go, then I must.”

But in the meantime Whish's force, having achieved its object, moved northwards to join the Commander-in-Chief. Before Sir Charles Napier could arrive, Lord Gough regained his reputation and ended the war by a decisive victory at Gujrat (February 21, 1849). The Sikh army was about 40,000 strong,⁴¹ but this time a careful reconnaissance was made, and Gough was prevailed upon to give his artillery full play. • He gave his troops a full day for battle, instead of an hour or two before darkness; not a musket fired until a terrific storm raging through two and a half hours had beaten down the Sikh gunners. The Sikh army was scattered by pursuit. On the 12th March, Sher Singh and Chatar Singh, along with their troops surrendered at discretion to General Gilbert at Rawalpindi, and the Afghan troops of Dost Muhammad, which had taken no active part in the war, were chased relentlessly westwards.

As soon as Lord Dalhousie heard of the surrender of Sher Singh and his troops, he considered that the opportune time to announce publicly the real intentions of the British Government had arrived. Accordingly, he sent his Foreign Secretary, Henry Elliot, to Lahore to communicate to the members of the Council of Regency, and to secure their acquiescence in, the British Government's decision to subvert the dynasty of Ranjit Singh, and to annex the Punjab to British dominions in India. Elliot arrived at Lahore on the 28th March, and on the same day he sent for Raja Tej Singh and Diwan Dina Nath, to both of whom he explained that the British Government had decided upon the annexation of the Punjab. To them this was a bolt from the blue, and they forthwith told the British envoy that they

⁴⁰ Quoted in Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, i, p. 211.

⁴¹ Sher Singh, during this interval, had been reinforced by Chatar Singh's troops. Some 1,500 horse-troops under Akram Khan, son of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, had also joined him.

were not in the least convinced of the right and justice of the threatened action. The Diwan also demurred to the expatriation of the Maharaja and his court, saying that in leaving the palace and its restraint, they would begin to lead licentious lives and bring scandal on the memory of Ranjit Singh.⁴² The only reply to all their protests was that "if they refused to accept the terms which the Governor-General offered, the Maharaja and themselves would be entirely at his mercy, and I (i. e., Elliot) had no authority to say that they would be entitled to receive any allowance whatever." They were thus left with no alternative, and after a discussion of three hours,⁴³ under immediate threat of sequestration of their property in case of refusal, they, along with the remaining members of the Council who were also called in, reluctantly put their signatures to the terms offered by the Governor-General.⁴⁴

On March 29, 1849, a grand darbar was held at the palace in the citadel. There in presence of the Resident, the leading Sardars, and the young Maharaja, who sat, for the last time, on his father's throne, Elliot read aloud the fateful proclamation wherein, recounting the Anglo-Sikh relations since Ranjit's death from his own point of view, Lord Dalhousie had added: "Wherefore the Governor-General of India has declared, and hereby proclaims that the kingdom of the Punjab is at an end; and that all the territories of Maharaja Dalip Singh are now and henceforth a portion of the British Empire in India."⁴⁵ When the proclamation had been recited in English, Persian and Hindustani, Diwan Dina Nath made another effort to get the severity of the treatment accorded to his sovereign reduced, reinforcing his arguments from European

⁴² Elliot's Note of a Conference with the Members of the Council of Regency held at the Lahore Residency, on March 28, 1849; Encl. 7 in No. 51, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁴³ Lee-Warner, *op. cit.*, i, p. 245.

⁴⁴ Elliot's Note of a Conference with the Members of the Council of Regency, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Proclamation declaring the Punjab to be "a portion of the British Empire in India," March 29, 1849; Encl. 22 in No. 52, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

history. "If France," said the Diwan, "after the defeat and imprisonment of Buonaparte, had been restored to its legitimate ruler, though the country yielded thirty crores of revenue, it would be no very extraordinary act of British clemency, if the Punjab, which yielded less than three crores, should be restored to the Maharaja."⁴⁶ He was, however, told that the time for clemency was past.⁴⁷ The young Maharaja was then required to put his signature on the deed of abdication, by which the whole of the Punjab, together with "all the property of the State of whatever description and wheresoever found" and the peerless Koh-i-Noor, were to belong to the British, and the Maharaja was to receive "a pension of not less than four and not exceeding five lakhs of Company's rupees per annum, and was to reside at such place as the Governor-General of India may select."⁴⁸ With this the ceremony came to an end, and as the British envoy left the palace, he had "the proud satisfaction of seeing the British colours hoisted on the citadel under a Royal salute from our own artillery,—at once proclaiming the ascendancy of British rule, and sounding the knell of Khalsa Raj."⁴⁹

On April 7, 1849, in a despatch⁵⁰ to the Secret Committee, Lord Dalhousie reported the annexation of the Punjab, and urged its apology. In preparing this despatch he exhausted his ingenuity in mis-statements and baseless accusations in order to justify his high-handed and absolutely unjustifiable action. He miserably failed to prove any violation of Treaty by the Lahore State. The only definite charge he levelled

⁴⁶ Elliot's Report of the Proceedings held at a Darbar in the Palace of Lahore on March 29, 1849; Encl. 8 in No. 51. Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Terms granted to Maharaja Dalip Singh; Encl. 9 in No. 51, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49).

⁴⁹ Elliot's Report of the Proceedings held at a Darbar, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Governor-General to Secret Committee, April 7, 1849; Miscellaneous Manuscript File No. 148, P. G. R. Also No. 52, Parliamentary Papers (1847-49). Unless otherwise stated the quotations used in the following pages are from this despatch.

against the Darbar was that "from the day when the Treaty (of Bhyrowal) was signed, to the present hour, not one rupee has ever been paid" in discharge of the subsidy of 22 lakhs of rupees as stipulated in the Treaty. This is a deliberate misstatement of facts, for on February 23, 1848, the Resident at Lahore had reported to the Government as follows: "The Darbar have paid into this treasury gold to the value of 1,356,837 rupees. By this payment they have reduced their debt to the British Government from upwards of forty lakhs of rupees to less than twenty-seven."⁵¹ But even if this were true, Lord Dalhousie should have known that it was almost impossible for the Darbar to restore financial equilibrium, for the great financial reforms introduced by the Resident—*against the wishes of the Council of Regency*—had resulted in a considerable reduction of revenue. "The settlement was," reported the Resident to the Government, "of course, *most summary*, and its details have yet to be filled up. Its working must be most carefully watched. *The Darbar was averse to its introduction, but yielded, as they always do; and contented themselves, with the exception of Raja Dina Nath, with standing aloof from its execution: leaving the whole matter to the Resident and his assistants . . .* Raja Dina Nath sees the financial embarrassment of the State, and feels that the more we interfere with details, especially where the revenue is concerned, the less will be the Darbar's responsibility for financial difficulties and deficiencies."⁵² This shows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that not only was the Government of India fully aware of these fiscal changes which rendered it almost impossible for the Council to pay punctually the annual subsidy, but that it was also solely responsible for these changes. It was mainly due to this consciousness that no complaint was ever made by the Government, presided over

⁵¹ John Lawrence to Elliot, February 23, 1848; L. 36/Bk. 178, P. G. R.

⁵² Currie to Elliot, April 6, 1848; No. 202/W. E. 8. 4. 1848, P. G. R.

by Lord Dalhousie, on account of the non-payment of the subsidy until the annexation of the Punjab, when it was put forward as one of the causes justifying that act.

Lord Dalhousie then tried to meet the objection "that the present dynasty in the Punjab cannot with justice be subverted since Maharaja Dalip Singh, being yet a minor, can hardly be held responsible for the acts of the nation," by merely stating that he "must dissent entirely from the soundness of this doctrine." But it was not the question of subverting a dynasty but of subverting a State, protected and administered under treaty, by the British Government. From the day the Treaty of Bhyrowal was signed to the day when the Punjab was annexed to the British Empire, the British Resident was the virtual ruler of the Punjab, and his control was never suspended or relaxed even for a day. Having thus controlled and directed the administration of the Lahore State for more than two years, through the troubles of an insurrection—increased in magnitude by his deliberate delay to suppress a local outbreak, and the high-handed acts of his representatives—, by means of his own Agent, Lord Dalhousie turned round when the insurrection had been put an end to, declared the Treaty invalid, and explained that the successful campaign, professedly undertaken to quell a rebellion against the Government of Maharaja Dalip Singh and to put down "all armed opposition to the *constituted authority*," was really a war against the Maharaja and the State of Lahore, whereby the British Government had "conquered" the Punjab. The following sarcastic and humorous, but nevertheless true, remarks on this transaction by Ludlow, no friend to Dalip Singh, but an honest man, are well worth perusal:

"Dalip Singh was an infant, his minority was only to end in 1854. We were his declared protectors. On our last advance into his country we had proclaimed (18th November, 1848) that we came to punish insurgents and to put down all "armed opposition to constituted authority." We fulfilled that pledge by annexing his whole country within six

months. On the 24th March 1849⁵³ the kingdom of the Punjab was declared to be at an end; the child, our protege, was pensioned off; all State property confiscated to the Company, the celebrated diamond, the Koh-i-Noor surrendered to the Queen. In other words, we 'protected' our ward by taking his whole territory from him.

"....Having once recognized and undertaken to protect Dalip Singh, it was a mockery to punish him for the faults of his subjects. As between us and him in putting down insurrection, we were simply fulfilling our duty towards him. No such act on the part of his subjects could give us any title against him. Fancy, if you can, a widow lady with a houseful of mutinous servants who turn out and attack the police. The police knock them on the head, walk into the house, and kindly volunteer to protect the mistress against any violence on their part. A quarrel again breaks out, the truncheons are again successful, and the inspector now politely informs the lady that her house and the estate on which it stands are no longer her own, but will be retained in fee simply by the police; that on turning out she will receive an annuity equal to about one and six pence in a pound of her rental, and that she must hand over for the use of the Chief Commissioner her best diamond necklace. Is this an exaggerated version of our conduct towards that innocent boy Dalip Singh, now grown into a Christian gentleman?"⁵⁴

⁵³ Obviously a misprint; it should be 29th March, 1849.

⁵⁴ Ludlow, *British India*, ii, p. 166, quoted in *The Maharaja Duleep Singh and the Government* (London, 1884), p. 48.

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